

القرآن الكريم  
وَمَا لِلدِّينِ هِيَ الْعَالَمِينَ

THE  
**ASCENDANT QUR'AN**  
*Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*

VOLUME 14  
Al-A'rāf:94–206



Muḥammad Ḥ. al-Āṣī





In the Name of Allah,  
the Mercy-Giving, the Merciful





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Muḥammad H. al-Āṣī

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT  
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Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

“Verily, Allah and His Angels send salutations on the Apostle.  
O You who are firmly committed [to Allah], you too [must]  
send the most worthy salutations and blessings upon him.”  
(Sūrah al-Aḥzāb:56)

In launching this *tafsīr*, we beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless His final Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), all the Prophets (ﷺ) who preceded him, and all those who, despite great difficulty and sacrifice, sincerely follow in their footsteps from the *ṣāliḥūn*, the *ṣiddiqūn*, the *shuhadā'*, and the *marḥūmūn*. We also beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless and amply reward those who have helped in the publication of this *tafsīr* in whatever capacity.

— The Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought



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## Publisher's Foreword

In the 14th volume of the *tafsīr*, *The Ascendant Qur'an: Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*, the *mufasssīr*, Imam Muḥammad Ḥ. al-ʿĀṣī provides commentary on the second half of *Sūrah al-Aʿrāf* (āyāt 94–206). As has been explained in previous volumes, the message of the Qur'an is narrated not merely as stories from the past but as a lifelong struggle of committed Muslims against injustice. Its message has to be related to the present. That is what the *mufasssīr* does in this *tafsīr*.

In the first half of this *sūrah*, the encounters of earlier Prophets (ﷺ) with their peoples are narrated. By rejecting the divine message, the errant were punished and their towns and dwellings destroyed. This was meant to warn the arrogant *mushriks* of Makkah that they too would face a similar fate should they persist in rejecting the message the noble Messenger was delivering to them. Unfortunately, most people in Makkah did not take heed, not unlike most people in positions of power and authority who do not easily yield to the truth because it would undermine their privileged positions.

And likewise, it is true today. People with power and authority become so engrossed in the pursuit of dominance in the *dunyā* that

they begin to assume they are invincible and there is no accountability for their misdeeds. In their misappraisal of things, nothing lies beyond this life and resurrection is a “fairytale,” not to mention the inevitable and pending accounting to Allah (ﷻ). This applied as much to the rich and powerful at the time of Muhammad (ﷺ) and even to the power-wielders at the time of earlier prophets as to their counterparts today.

In the second part of this *sūrah*, the following broad themes are discussed:

1. Mūsá’s public encounter with Pharaoh;
2. Pharaoh and his people having to endure numerous calamities as warnings — a mercy so that they may return to Allah (ﷻ);
3. Allah’s glad tidings to Muhammad (ﷺ) that he has been sent as a messenger to all humanity (7:158);
4. Mūsá (ﷺ) and the Children of Israel are liberated from Pharaoh’s bondage as they cross the sea and their adversaries drown. Then Allah (ﷻ) called Mūsá to Mt. Sinai to give him the tablets inscribed with divine instructions. In his absence, however, Banū Isrā’īl resorted to calf-worship even though Mūsá’s brother Hārūn (ﷺ) was in their midst to guide them, warning against regression into *kufr* and *shirk*;
5. Detailed narration of Banū Isrā’īl’s repeated violations of Allah’s commands and divine retribution in the form of primate regression or devolution;
6. Allah warranted a covenant from the progeny of Adam (ﷺ), even before they were born, to the effect that He is their divinity/authority (7:172), and their affirmation of it;
7. Comparison of a scholar who suborns his knowledge for worldly benefit, usually in the form of patronage to those who try to rival Allah’s power on earth, with a panting dog (7:175);
8. Another reminder that the deities people conform to besides Allah (ﷻ) can neither do them good, nor cause harm. Only Allah is worthy of man’s commitment, deference, and reverence. This means that man agrees to conform to Allah’s counsel and execute His command.

In the *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-A'rāf* covered in this volume, it must be borne in mind that Mūsá (ﷺ) was saved through divine intervention despite the Pharaoh's order to kill all the newborn male children of Banū Isrā'il in Egypt. Allah (ﷻ) manufactured the temporal circumstances in such a way that Mūsá's mother was inspired to place her infant in a hamper, letting it float on the Nile River so as to escape Pharaoh's murder of all newborns, while Pharaoh's wife was similarly roused to retrieve the hamper and the baby, ironically setting up Pharaoh to become the benefactor of his ultimate vanquisher (see details in *Sūrahs TāHa* and *al-Qaṣaṣ*). Allah further facilitated Mūsá's mother to nurse her newborn. Yet, even though he was raised in the luxury and privilege of Pharaoh's palace, none of those trappings inhibited Mūsá from publicly challenging Pharaoh when Allah commissioned him as His prophet.

The message Allah (ﷻ) delivers in this *sūrah* — as in many other *sūrahs* of this majestic Qur'an — is that civilizations fail because the accumulation of excess wealth and power make their bearers so arrogant and tyrannical that they either become oblivious to or unmindful of the injustice and oppression they themselves had a hand in proliferating all over society. They get to the point of assuming that their "success" in creating class differentiation between themselves and the riffraff results from the "natural order" of things and their own peculiar set of exceptional (usually racial or national) characteristics, made official by a "divine" endorsement. Even though their ancestors may have acceded to it in generations long expired, they summarily reject the presence of a higher authority directing the world or ultimate power controlling what happens therein. Because nothing intoxicates and inebriates like unbridled power, they spurn the constraints of the divine moral and legal code, setting up their societies to be engulfed by social upheaval and "natural" disaster. Feeling they can do as they please because they are temporarily insulated from the repercussions of their wrongdoing and God's immediate retribution, they proceed to socialize their peoples into subsidizing their self-indulgent liberties and accepting the normalization of their birthright status — the type of conformity that allows them to replace God's law with their

constitutions, God's overlordship with their governments, and God's power over life with their genocidal crimes against humanity.

Regrettably this mindset — or a slight variant of it — is prevalent even among some Muslims. They look at the world, see gross injustices — the indiscriminate killing of innocent people in the millions, poor countries hemorrhaging refugees, and mass starvation — and then ask, “When will Allah’s justice catch up with the oppressors and tyrants as He has promised?” What these nominal Muslims fail to realize is that Allah’s corrective agency works through the struggle of His prophets and their heirs, the covenant-bearing Muslims. The committed Muslims are Allah’s instruments of transformative (revolutionary) change. While Allah (ﷻ) has the capacity to destroy the oppressors with a word — as He did in the past — He wants His faithful subjects to fulfill their obligations. Allah’s time frame is concerned less with the inexorable expansion of injustice at all levels of society than with the maturation of the Islamic vanguard that is tasked with reversing this process. The noble Messenger (ﷺ) did not sit out the Makkan *mushriks* and wait for Allah’s punishment to destroy them. He prepared a devoted cadre imbued with the knowledge that Allah’s word is uppermost and that it is their obligation to strive to establish it. They struggled and some even died, but they did not lose hope in Allah’s victory, despite the configuration of worldly odds. Allah allowed them to triumph in the Battles of Badr, al-Aḥzāb, and Ḥunayn, among others, leading ultimately to the establishment of Islam in the entire Arabian Peninsula during the lifetime of the noble Messenger.

Unfortunately, the majority of the world’s Muslims are waiting for some kind of a miracle through the agency of their own version of the messiah, the Mahdī. That is, they want change without struggle, a reshuffling of the world order without sacrifice. What Allah (ﷻ) wants of them is to leverage the miracle in their possession — His guidance, His counsel — in the way their Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrated all those centuries ago. This requires clarity of thought: that all power, authority, and decision-making belong to Allah. Human beings are His representatives on earth (2:30) and must carry out His commands. They cannot be lawgivers; only

Allah is. Yet, most so-called Muslims in positions of power are guilty of usurping Allah's authority by indulging in practices that directly override His commands.

The heedlessness of the world's ruling class to a final accounting in front of the Most High suggests that the committed Muslims are not up to speed in projecting a viable Islamic model to alleviate global insecurity and avert the specter of perpetual war, which in and of itself points to a deeper problem: their defective or parochial appraisal of *tawhīd* (the Oneness of Allah), a theme that runs through all the *sūrah*s of the Qur'an. The central feature of this *tawhīd* is Allah's authority. Most people in the world including many non-Muslims hold the view that God will be merciful and forgiving in a future domain that has very little to do with the everyday goings-on of the temporal world. Almost all Muslims have also come to accept this narrow understanding, definitely in behavior if not in spirit. However, the applicability of Allah's social law (*sunnah*) in the material realm of man has always been incontrovertible — past and present. Allah's authority in the *ākhirah* and the *dunyā* is inevitable and it manifests in the unfolding of His *sunan* (social laws), even though the dominant power culture has invested billions in money and other resources to efface this information from the public mind.

Secular man has tried to usurp the divine attributes of lawgiving and authority, resulting in unabating suffering and environmental catastrophe. Human beings have a tendency to become unusually manic with material and military power. Scientific progress and the "control" of nature has exacerbated this hubris. Such power is not particularly disposed to an ambiance that expands the dissemination of social and economic justice. This is where Allah's guidance becomes crucial but those who fail to take heed expose themselves to His corrective justice. This has happened with many societies and civilizations in the past and will happen again. Nature's warning signs in the proliferation of ever more destructive hurricanes, wildfires, and earthquakes are signaling the Euro-Zionist-American power maniacs to return to the responsibilities that accrue to Allah's social convention,

Corruption has become manifest on land and in the sea as an outcome of what the hands of men have earned: and so He will let them taste [the evil of] some of their doings, so that they might return [to the right path]. Say, “Go all over the earth, and behold what happened in the end to those [transgressors] who lived before [you]: most of them were wont to ascribe authority and dominion to beings other than Allah.” Set, then, your face steadfastly toward the one ever-true *dīn*, before there comes from Allah a Day [of reckoning] that cannot be averted (30:41–43).

Evidence of the destruction of “great civilizations” in history is clearly visible. And should they continue in this direction, today’s arrogant powers are destined for a similar fate.

In the story of Mūsá’s encounter with Pharaoh, a delicate point was being conveyed to the Makkan *mushriks*. Just as Mūsá was brought up in the house of Pharaoh, so Muhammad (ﷺ) grew up in full view of the power wielders of Makkah. They recognized his impeccable character. Pharaoh had accused Mūsá of trying to dislodge him from power. The Makkan *mushriks* also leveled this allegation against the noble Messenger. What they failed to understand is that the Prophet was not seeking power so that he could replace a tribal dictatorship with an “Islamic” one; rather his mission was to reconfigure society according to Allah’s laws and the divine reference point. But this could only be achieved through the principled exercise of legitimate power. The Makkan *mushriks* were a major impediment in the realization of this goal since they operated according to their own whims to serve their narrow special interests.

Just as Pharaoh had branded Banū Isrā’īl as the slave underclass of society, so the Makkan chiefs similarly disparaged the followers of Muhammad (ﷺ) as lowly creatures unworthy of attention, respect, or dignity. Consequently, they were oppressed and humiliated. Despite wielding enormous power including a huge army that he could mobilize, Pharaoh was unable to thwart the public chal-

lence posed by Mūsá (ﷺ). True, there were a number of divine warnings in the form of natural calamities but Pharaoh and his followers, barring a few exceptions, remained unmoved. Ultimately Pharaoh's army drowned in the sea while Mūsá and his followers were saved. Pharaoh also drowned but his body was preserved for all eternity as a warning to future generations. It remains encased in a glass case in the Cairo museum to this day! Likewise, the Qurayshī ruling class of Makkah also sought to impose a "final solution" on Muhammad and the intrepid Muslims who were intent on making the truth the basis for human coexistence and advancement. But, as with Pharaoh, tyranny melted away when the truth gained its power base in Madinah, and the Makkan overlords were not able to drive their genocidal program to completion.

With the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ), the constantly unfolding miracle going forward would be the liberation of the human heart and mind from any limitations imposed on them by tyranny, enslavement, despotism, and cruelty. The mind is Allah's creation, and the Qur'an is Allah's dispensation: henceforward, the two would work synergistically to overcome the age-old social forces of racism, nationalism, authoritarianism, and secularism that have driven man into the cage of human servitude to material power. The miracle of Muhammad — making the transformative potential of the Qur'an accessible to all humanity — was not bound to time and place, as with previous prophets. It transcended both, and hence, any human being anywhere can experience this miracle. Therefore, it only makes sense that in this *sūrah*, Allah (ﷻ) declares Muhammad as the messenger to all humanity (7:158) — the expected Messiah, the deliverer, the one who would give humanity the confidence, the fortitude, and the sense of purpose to know that Allah's final revelation will suffice, regardless of what comes their way. All earlier prophets were sent to particular communities in specific localities. Muhammad was not sent as a prophet only to the Arabs; his message and mission were and are universal. He is the last and final Messenger of Allah (ﷻ) to all humanity (33:40).

But the expectation of Allah's patronage, the reliance on His forgiveness through inevitable error and recovery, and the consci-

entizing of His *dhikr* through struggle would all be moot were the beckoning of His divinity/authority not a yearning of human nature. To this end, the son of Adam (ﷺ) acceded to the eternal covenant with Allah (ﷻ) when he was still in the realm of potentiality. This is powerfully expressed in the *āyāt*,

**And bear in mind your Sustainer who brings forth from the children of Adam — from their loins — their descendants and [who caused] them to testify to themselves [upon hearing His question], “Am I not your Sustainer? Said [they], “[Positively] yes, we testify. [Of this, We remind you] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, “But we were oblivious to this fact [Allah’s Creator/Sustainer relationship to man].” Or [lest you] say, “But our ancestors were *mushriks* in times past, and we were their descendants; do You then destroy us for what [preceding] violators had done [many generations ago]?” In such a manner do We go into detail about Our power presence trusting they will return [to Us] (7:172–174).**

Following this covenant pledge, Allah (ﷻ) draws our attention to how it can be peremptorily violated in a world where corrupt power demands the kind of cheap legitimacy that can be bought with the promise of favor and fame. He gives the example of a person who was given knowledge and presented with evidence of the truth. Instead of adhering to Allah’s commands as a result of this knowledge, such a person pursued the pleasures of the world by becoming a slave of his desires or a willing tool of those whose desires cannot be satiated; in short, a minion of Satan. Allah compares such a pathetic creature to a panting dog, “...if you approach him menacingly, he will drool with his tongue; and if you leave him alone, he will drool with his tongue” (7:176).

Alas, we Muslims have too many people that fit this description. They have knowledge but do not appreciate the responsibility that goes with it. Instead of using divine knowledge to guide people to the right path, they abandon it in pursuit of worldly pleasures or



personal material gain. Even worse, they misguide others based on their claim to having knowledge. That Muslims have fallen into despair while secularism holds sway over much of the world is the direct result of Muslims abandoning scripture and eliminating the Prophet (ﷺ) from scriptural history.

Throughout the noble Qur'an and especially in this *sūrah*, we learn about the struggles of Allah's Prophets (ﷺ). They faced trials and tribulations, even exile and death, but they nonetheless upheld the principle of maintaining justice in society. It was through such sacrifices that Allah's laws were ultimately implemented. Today injustices have been institutionalized at every level in society. The rich and powerful exploit the weak and poor. The wealth gap between the two has now reached an all-time extreme — yet no one in the public airwaves characterizes this as “extremism.”<sup>1</sup> Far from recognizing that this is the direct result of man-made policies, the oppressors and tyrants blame the victims for their misfortune.

If people were to affirm *tawhīd* (Allah's combined authority and divinity), the injustices gripping the world would disappear. This was demonstrated during the time of the noble Messenger (ﷺ) and will be demonstrated again when people return to their fundamental responsibility of adhering to Allah's commands — for, Allah (ﷻ) alone is man's source of values, laws, and vital information that sets a straight course for a prosperous life.

As with previous volumes, Afeef Khan has edited this volume to make the text flow smoothly. Imran Khan and Hassam Munir have helped with proofreading. We are indebted to them all as well as to those who have helped in numerous other ways, some wishing to remain anonymous.

Getting this far with the *tafsīr* project has not come without attendant obstacles. Islamic work has never been easy, nor is it a walk in the park in a world where Muslims are routinely assailed as fundamentalists, terrorists, Islamofascists, anti-Semites, security threats, and the like. Stereotyping Muslims with these labels, entrapping the naive among them to justify the labels, and collectively punishing them in the “war of terror” has driven the type of fear into Islamic scholarship that is searching for the favor of presidents and princes.

However, for those who have made a commitment to read this *tafsir*, rest assured that this work has been subject to neither fear, nor favor. We plow on because we believe this work to be essential. Even if the timidity of the present generation has paralyzed it to some extent, we remain optimistic that future generations would find it useful. Returning to divine guidance as contained in the noble Qur'an and as exemplified by the Sunnah and Sirah of Muhammad (ﷺ) are the essential building blocks for the re-emergence of the Islamic civilization in the not too distant future.

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Jumādā al-Ūlā 3, 1440AH (1-9-2019CE)

## Endnotes

- 1 Anthony Shorrocks, James Davies, and Rodrigo Lluberias, *Credit Suisse Research Institute Global Wealth Report 2018*. (Zurich, Switzerland: Credit Suisse Group AG, 2018).  
<https://www.credit-suisse.com/media/assets/corporate/docs/about-us/research/publications/global-wealth-report-2018-en.pdf>

## List of Honorifics

Honorifics are the words expressed by every Muslim when the name of Allah (ﷻ), the name of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the names of Allah's previous Prophets (ﷺ) are mentioned, spoken, or written. These are placed in parentheses after the name of each of the above is expressed. They are known to nearly every Muslim; however as this is an English-language *tafsīr* meant for a largely English-speaking audience that may have little experience with this kind of Islamic etiquette, the list below identifies the ones used throughout this volume, along with their meanings and specific usages.



*subhānahu wa-ta'ālā* (Exalted and August is He): used for Allah alone.



*ṣallā allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam* (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family): used for Muhammad in any and all of his designations, such as *Messenger of Allah*, *the Prophet*, *the Messenger*, *Rasūl-Allāh*, etc.



*'alayhi al-salām* (peace be upon him): used for every other prophet; masculine singular.



*'alayhim al-salām* (peace be upon them): used for all other prophets; inclusive plural, masculine and feminine.



*'alayhā al-salām* (peace be upon her): used for Eve, the wife of Adam, and for Mary, the mother of Jesus, among others; feminine singular.



*'alayhimā al-salām* (peace be upon them both): used for any combination of two prophets, for Adam and Eve, or for Mary and Jesus together; inclusive dual, masculine and feminine.

# Transliteration Chart

## Consonants

أ	none (initial)	ض	ḍ
ؤ	' (medial or final)	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	ة	ḥ
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

## Vowels and Diphthongs

□	a	ا□	ā	□ى	á
□ُ	u	آ□	ā	□ئى	ay
□ِ	i	□و	ū	□ؤ	aw
		□ى	ī		

The small box in the table above represents an Arabic consonant; for instance, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table would assume the following configuration,

ف□	fa	فَا□	fā	فَعِ□	fá
ف□ُ	fu	فَا□ُ	fā	فَعِ□ِ	fay
ف□ِ	fi	فُو□	fū	فَعُو□	faw
		فَعِ□ِ	fī		

## Tanwīn and Tashdīd

□ان	an	□ئى	ayy	□اؤ	aww
□ئى	an	□و	ūw	ف□	ff
□ن	un	□ئى	īy (medial)	ش□	shsh
□ن	in	□ئى	ī (final)	ر□	rr

Similarly, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table above would look like the following,

فَان	fan	فَعِ□ِ	fayy	فَاؤ	faww
فَان	fan	فَعُو□	fūw	ف□	ff
فَان	fun	فَعِ□ِ	fīy (medial)	ش□	shsh
فَان	fin	فَعِ□ِ	fī (final)	ر□	rr

## 7

### Sūrah al-A'rāf, Part 2

#### The Faculty of Discernment

Herein commences the ninth *juz'* of the holy Qur'an. The first three-fourths of it covers the remainder of *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, these *āyāt* being revealed in Makkah; whereas the balance comprises the first part of *Sūrah al-Anfāl*, which is known to have been imparted in Madinah. In the previous volume of this *tafsīr*, this writer explained those *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-A'rāf* that detailed the ideological and civilizational showdown between some Prophets of Allah and their respective societies. What transpired in this intra-societal polarization between Prophets Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ, and Shu'ayb (ﷺ) and their followers on one side and the elites and their status quo numerical majority on the other side were the spontaneous cataclysmic occurrences in nature that annihilated those societies. The prophets and their followers were delivered from the dangers attending those natural upheavals.

This volume picks up where Prophet Shu'ayb's narrative concluded. It begins with a timely comment about how Allah's will

flows through the systems and societies of God-deniers. As an expression of His love for even those humans who deny Him, Allah (ﷻ) entreats them to “tune in” before it is too late, to stop taking a firm stand on what is generally understood to be wrong, immoral, and destructive. Allah’s admonition is often escorted by strenuous and difficult times, which may serve to “open up” a people’s social sense of direction. A people remaining oblivious to these warnings are then blessed with good and prosperous times, as these, too, may rouse them to reconsider their social sense of direction. However, if all this fails and such peoples and societies exude a confidence that detaches them from their Creator and Director, and they interpret life as a form of entertainment and merrymaking, then at that time they set themselves up for a self-generated, fast, and aggravated termination. This is when Allah suddenly overtakes them (7:94–95).

There is a strong and direct relationship between values of divine origin and social laws of divine origin. Allah’s will does not discriminate between man’s principles and values on the one hand and nature’s laws and disasters on the other. As the time lag between the depreciation of the former and the emergence of the latter is long, this relationship has gone unnoticed by shallow researchers and materialistic scholars. The effects of a fraying social morality will take quite an extended period of time to erupt into calamitous and annihilating shakeups (7:96).

The eye-opening reference to man’s social values and Allah’s social laws is followed by pity for those who refused to take heed despite myriad red flags and alarm bells. The imperative of history is then brought to the attention of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the inheritors of this accurate information: if the establishments and systems of the dominant power culture on earth are going to disregard this definition of the rise and fall of societies and civilizations, then the bearers of this Book, the committed Muslims, are not permitted to do so (7:100–102). This is the backdrop that introduces the long and extended saga of Mūsá (ﷺ) with the Children of Israel; and frames some concluding remarks about the *mushriks*.



## Why Civilizations Fail

This lesson begins by explaining how societies are cycled through tragedy and prosperity as a means for them to find their way to Allah (ﷻ) as authority and power over peoples and nations. But when both of these approaches fail to produce the desired level of commitment to Allah, and these societies begin to think they are affluent and prosperous due to their ethnicity, race, nationalism, or any other physical trait, then they reach the point of no return when Allah's judgement upon them is pending. Had these types of societies embraced Allah as the only authority and power they would have gone on to more substantial, more flourishing, and more productive times. Allah would have deluged them with fortune and opulence from all directions.

- (7:94)      **And never yet have We sent a prophet to any society without trying its people with misfortune and hardship, so that they might humble themselves;**
- (7:95)      **Then We transformed the affliction into ease of life, so that they thrived and said [to themselves], “Misfortune and fortune brushed our forefathers as well” — whereupon We took them to task, all of a sudden, without their being aware [of what was coming].**
- (7:96)      **Yet if the people of those societies had but committed themselves to Allah and been on their guard [concerning Allah's punishment], We would indeed have opened up for them blessings out of heaven and earth; but they gave the lie to the truth — and so We took them to task through what they [themselves] had been doing.**
- (7:97)      **Can, then, the people of any community ever feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them by night, while they are asleep?**
- (7:98)      **Or, can the people of any society ever feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them in broad daylight, while they are engaged in [worldly] play?**

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ  
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّى عَفَوْا  
 وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ فَأَخَذْنَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا  
 يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَنَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ  
 بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَهُم بِمَا كَانُوا  
 يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيَّتًا وَهُمْ  
 نَائِمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ أَوْ أَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ  
 يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ  
 الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِن بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَا  
 أَن لَوْ نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا  
 يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ تِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَاءِهَا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ  
 رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِن قَبْلُ  
 كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ  
 مِّنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِن وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

- (7:99) Can they, then, ever feel secure from Allah's deep devising? For none feels secure from Allah's deep devising save people who are [already] lost.
- (7:100) Has it, then, not become obvious to those who have inherited the earth in the wake of former generations that, if We so willed, We could smite them [too] by means of their sins, sealing their hearts so that they cannot hear [the truth about this matter]?
- (7:101) Unto those [earlier] societies — some of whose stories We [now] relate to you — there had indeed come apostles of their own with all evidence of the truth [pertaining to Allah's authority and power]; but they would not commit themselves to anything to which they had once given the lie: thus it is that Allah seals the hearts of those who deny the truth [relevant to His authority and power];
- (7:102) And in most of them We found no bond with anything that is divinely reasoned and validated — and most of them We found to be iniquitous indeed (al-A'rāf:94–102).

This lesson applies to all societies that are going through one or the other of these historical cycles. To date, no human society has understood this historical lesson well enough to be able to avert its inevitable consequences.

### Empires and Their Selectively Redacted Histories

And never yet have We sent a prophet to any society without trying its people with tragic losses and hardship, so that they might humble themselves; and then We transformed the affliction into ease of life, so that they flourished and said [to themselves], “Hardship and prosperity touched our forefathers as well” — whereupon We took them to task, all of a sudden, without their being aware [of what was coming] (7:94–95).

This *āyah* outlines a social law that has rarely informed the subject matter of garden-variety social studies textbooks found in high schools and universities. This divinely calculated social law refers to Allah sending His Prophets (ﷺ) to those societies that have already cycled through phases of the worst of times and the best of times, all the while remaining incapable of or unwilling to yield to the authority of the One Creator and the power of the One God. When Allah (ﷻ) finally sends such people a prophet, this represents the final stage of attempting to put everything into focus and delivering these people from an imminent or forthcoming annihilating disaster.

Hard for many of those who are unlettered in scripture to understand is that the subjects and subordinates of Allah (ﷻ), His attendants and His keepers, become through their lifelong struggle the repositories of His volition and will. This interaction between God-abiding humans and the Almighty on one side, and God-avoiding humans and anti-Godly regimes and governments on the other side sets the stage for an eventual and final God-induced termination of divine enemies and competitors. This Qur'anic understanding of history as it pertains to the rise and fall of societies and civilizations has not risen to the level of importance it deserves in the discourses of Islamic historians and scholars. In fact, this writer can say with good confidence that most would-be Islamic academicians going on to higher institutions and studies of history, historicism, anthropology, and other related social sciences do not have a well established Qur'anic perspective on this subject.

The chaotic approaches in the West leave much to be desired when compared to this Qur'anic overview of human history, societal dissolution, and civilizational decline. In the Western context, historicism in its variety of usages, represents the conviction that human experience cannot be understood or evaluated apart from the particular social, historical context of development and change in which it appears.

In the 19th century, the term *historicism* was used to downgrade theories of society dependent upon historical knowledge. Wilhelm Dilthey, Heinrich Rickert, and others, developed the distinction

between natural sciences and historical sciences, the latter appropriate for human, societal phenomena, the former for the study of nature. Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923), convinced that skepticism resulted from viewing knowledge and experience as subject to change, spoke of the crisis of historicism, which can be overcome only through historical involvement, not by resorting to trans-historical perspectives. Josiah Royce (1855–1916), as he modified his early idealism, developed a social theory of reality with a changing community of interpretation moving toward universal community, a view contributing much to historicist perspectives. Karl Mannheim (1893–1947), asserting that static epistemologies are outdated, founded the sociology of knowledge, which viewed all knowledge as inescapably related to particular socio-historical contexts.<sup>330</sup>

Michael Polanyi (1891–1976) and H. Richard Niebuhr (1894–1962) give historicism its most significant contemporary statements. Polanyi, moving toward a post-critical philosophy, tried to demonstrate that the natural sciences, no less than the humanities, have tacit, fiduciary (pertaining to trust) dimensions rooted in social and cultural contexts. Niebuhr affirms that human beings must conceive all things as temporal and historical, not in terms of abstract time, but rather in terms of time that is “particular and concrete... the time of a definite society with distinct language, economic and political relations, religious faith and social organization.”<sup>331</sup>

**We have not sent an apostle to a society except after it [the society] has been subjected to friction and hardship, in the hope that they humble themselves (7:94).**

Allah (ﷻ) does not desire to make people suffer as they embark on their livelihoods, acquire possessions, or gain wealth. Nor is he a reactionary god; he cannot be injured or offended. In pagan societies or among people who have no understanding of His power and majesty there may be creeds that present God as a deity of vengeance and retaliation. But human appraisals of Allah do not contain Him. If His social laws in the matter of societal disintegration permit such things to happen it is because these laws were

meant to “drive” people to a realization of His authority and power, or to end their wayward existence should they seek a confrontation with Him.

It is within the flow of life that human nature is stimulated by a “wake-up call.” At times friction and difficulties may have a wake-up effect on societies and communities. Once people find their way to Allah (ﷻ) they realize who He is and hence who they are with respect to Him. This is the social attitude that ends up being attuned to the God who is the only authority and power with His subjects honoring Him in that capacity. This relationship is not a “need” of God, and it is not something “personal” with God. Rather this is a need of man and a necessity for the well-being and balance of his existence that puts life in its peaceful mode,

**And [tell them that] I have not created the jinn and men to any end other than they may conform to Me. [But withal], no sustenance do I ever demand of them, nor do I demand that they feed Me: for, verily, Allah Himself is the Provider of all sustenance, the Lord of all might, the Eternal! (51:56–58).**

If all social beings, inclusive of man and jinn, were to come together as if they were one body in obedience to Allah (ﷻ) they would not add a scintilla to His dominion. And if they were all to disobey Him they would not diminish anything in His dominion. To the contrary, it is this obedience that turns out to be of immeasurable benefit to peoples’ lives on earth. When Allah is the only authority that man honors, all other authorities are rendered useless and precarious. Earthly, temporal authorities tend to dislocate man’s relationship with Allah. Man’s acquiescence to the authority of Allah frees him from the potent absorption of his internal and sometimes lustful desires. It also liberates him from the servility to other human beings — kings, presidents, emperors, and the like.

When man, under harsh circumstances, turns to Allah in humility, seeking insight, he begins to feel what it means to have a

loving God and what it means to be an obeying man. Allah's love, though, does not violate His justice. He will not interminably extend His love to those who are actively and systematically hostile to Him. This explains why such antagonistic societies — despite a prophet spending a lifetime beseeching and admonishing them — are finally destroyed. If pain does not stimulate a heart for Allah (ﷻ), if comfort does not animate a conscience for Him, and if a prophet cannot motivate a people for Him, then that particular society has sealed its own fate,

**Then We transformed the affliction into ease of life, so that they thrived and said [to themselves], “Tragic losses and opulence touched our ancestors as well” — whereupon We took them to task, all of a sudden, without their being aware [of what was coming] (7:95).**

This describes the behavior of affluent nations. They comport themselves with no regard for the feelings and visions of the less “developed” nations. Consider, for example, the imperium known as the United States of America and how this description fits. When then US President Ronald Reagan went to Bitberg, Germany, in 1985 and gave a speech at a graveyard filled with Nazi officers who carried out the media-hyped Holocaust, many Americans and Europeans were appalled by his apparent act of homage to what current historians consider to be the most vicious regime in history. George F. Will, the right-wing television commentator and a defender of Reagan, tried to explain away what many others considered to be a gaffe, “I’ve been talking to German youth, Will told his *ABC News* listeners, and they are saying to me, ‘Forget history! Let’s move on.’”<sup>332</sup>

For an alleged conservative to say that one should forget history — very recent, very relevant history — is telling. But there is a tendency in American life that resonates with this willful amnesia. America is the “new land” in all meanings of “new,” and among those is the capacity to leave the old behind. In some ways, from a particular point of view, this attitude may be refreshing and

invigorating. However, this *āyah* is saying that deviant societies, as they cut themselves off from God and scripture, become fearful of looking at history and learning from it or dismissive of it altogether when it indicts them of the same crimes committed by their predecessors. And going a step further, when history is no longer accurate, as is the case in the media and mainstream presentations of history, the thought of considering history becomes repugnant.

Forgetting history is a national pastime of the opinion and policy elite in the United States. Take the recent history of Iraq, for instance. All the editorializing about the evil of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in the run-up to the 2003 war rarely mentioned how Ronald Reagan saved him, George H.W. Bush built his regional policy around him, the CIA supported him, and so on. The fourth estate presented Ṣaddām Ḥusayn to a gullible public as if he emerged from the head of Zeus in August 1990 to occupy Kuwait — that is when history began. US Senator John McCain’s comment about not owing anything to Haiti pivots on the same kind of ignorance, neglect, or hubris. When *ABC News* anchor, Peter Jennings, was interviewing Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani in the early-1990s, he began by saying, “At long last, Mr. President, don’t you think you owe an apology to the American people for the hostage taking in 1979?” Rafsanjani ruefully pointed to the CIA coup against Mohammad Mosaddegh and a quarter century of support for the bloodthirsty shah.<sup>333</sup>

There are so many instances of this “forgetting” that it begins to look intentional. Does anyone recall the American-led genocide in the Philippines in the early-1900s? What about the ethnic-cleansing of indigenous peoples in what is now America? Or which American schoolbooks recount the multiple military occupations and interventions in Nicaragua, Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, not to mention scores of others? The Anglo-American colonizers of these lands call that Manifest Destiny (the 19th-century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the US throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable).

Political leaders will rarely acknowledge historical facts that are inconvenient to their policies or worldview. Others in the



policy world and the news business could fill this vacuum, as their responsibility to the public suggests, but they have their own agendas, key among which is to cozy up to the people in power.

Apart from just not taking the time to sort out the complexities of history (which, by the way, are not always that complicated), forgetting is convenient because it exists in the domain that muddies responsibility. That is, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn can be blamed for everything if his occupation of Kuwait or his gassing of the Kurds is the starting point. Fidel Castro can look particularly nasty if the decades of American support for corrupt dictators before him are summarily shrugged off. Affluent societies do not want to be bothered by contexts that intrude upon their conventional wisdom about things, hence there can be no such thing as American culpability.<sup>334</sup>

It does not make sense to strike a balance between paralyzing memories and willful political forgetfulness. Discussing history, reminding people that there are contexts and reasons for contemporary events, would be a start. That might get in the way of the “reality shows,” infotainment, or obsessions about the latest trend, but with a little work, history could be interesting as well as enlightening, especially if the study of history is guided by scriptural facts, certainties, and principles.

### Nuances of Material Power That Precede Self-Destruction

**Yet if the people of those societies had but committed themselves to Allah’s authority and been on their guard concerning Allah’s power, We would indeed have opened up for them blessings out of heaven and earth: but they belied [Us] — and so We took them to task through what they [themselves] had been doing (7:96).**

Societies that try to demote Allah’s authority and disregard His power would have had so much more surplus and abundant wealth had they only honored the golden standard of abiding by the Creator’s authority and power. In other scholarly explanations of this

*āyah*, a complementary view suggests that if these societies would have yielded to Allah's authority and power, having no other authority and power to interfere with their lives, then Allah (ﷻ) would have enriched the meanings of scripture and understanding of revelation that come from heaven and are practiced on earth.

A yet deeper consideration of this *āyah* clarifies the confusion that sets in when human character is appraised less by what people do than by what they say. Consider, for example, the abundance of Muslims in this world, who on closer inspection appear to be overwhelmingly poverty-stricken, destitute, and needy. Many Muslim parts of the world are to be found in desert or typhoon areas. On the other hand, the non-Muslim parts of the world, which have no obvious or remarkable relationship with God or scripture, have wealth, natural resources, and prosperity galore. However, this cosmetic view of reality is only skin deep.

The crystalline lens of this definite and rigorous Qur'an brings into focus the facts behind the visible facts of life. It is true that some two billion people in the world say with the force of custom and tradition they are Muslims. But should such a facile verbal affirmation qualify them to be practitioners of a commitment to Allah's heaven-to-earth authority (*īmān*) or to be the day-to-day reckoners of His power presence? There is a monumental flaw in the social coagulation of these two billion people: they are incapable of jelling together into a political will that answers only to Allah (ﷻ) as power and authority, and to no one else. Even if they were given the benefit of the doubt, the reality is that two billion individual Muslims do not necessarily constitute an *ummaḥ*.

For those who have the stomach to take a closer look, they will not be able to escape the contradiction between the Muslims' expressed words of Islam and their open and explicit social behavior that accedes to any authority except Allah's. Hundreds of millions of individual Muslims literally have no problem with succumbing to earthly authorities of blood and flesh. These earthly authorities — in the image of a king in Arabia, a president in America, or a monopoly of interests that runs the governmental show from behind the scenes — have become the source of these

Muslims' values, the inspiration of their future, the reference for their disagreements, and the arbitrator of their wars. These types of Muslims are not *mu'mins*, nor are they *muttaqīs*. A *mu'min* and a *muttaqī* can never accept the false authorities of imperialist priorities, Zionist racism, corporate interests, or a military-banker-industrial complex.

In order to surmount this obstacle, the *masjids* and congregations of Muslims have to start clarifying to themselves primarily the difference between the authority of man and the authority of Allah (ﷻ). The Muslims of today and the Muslims in the first generations after the Prophet (ﷺ) are leagues apart because the latter were clear and motivated on the issue of authority and power. They were quick and resolute in stating that these two fundamental and defining concepts belong to Allah and to none besides Him. But when this elementary question is posed to the most “pious” Muslims in our time they will become defensive, running around in circles and giving answers that circumvent the core dimension of this *dīn*. The first generations of Muslims were uncompromising about Allah's authority and power, and thus they were showered with blessings, prosperity, and the prolific understanding that comes with this type of relationship and this type of reliance upon Allah.

The fiber of life exists within this relationship pertaining to authority and power between human societies and the Creator of all. Once these societies take matters of authority and power into their own hands, establishing a track record of disregard for Allah (ﷻ), His scripture, and His prophets by omitting the issue of authority and power from running man's affairs, then this is when such societies begin the downward slide toward their own ruin,

**Can, then, the people of any society ever feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them by night, while they are asleep? Why, can the people of any society ever feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them in broad daylight, while they are engaged in [worldly] amusement? (7:97–98).**

These *āyāt* bring out the character of nations and empires so self-consumed by their status and prestige that they think they have become invincible. After some research, it appears that this subject of power and authority in the crash of civilizations and the fall of societies is not a common one in the mainstream media. For good reason, no power-hungry and power-centered nation is going to speak at length about how its erstwhile counterparts were terminated. Notwithstanding, Allah's *āyāt* want all and sundry to concentrate their minds on this issue. Where are the dominant societies of history? Where are the superpowers of the past? There were actual and vibrant societies that perished: what happened to them? Why do they no longer exist?

All these perished societies failed to appreciate and venerate Allah's power; they failed to factor in how His power impacts their lives. Even when they were acquainted with their faults, confronted with their mistakes, and informed of their serious deviations they still thought they were impregnable and indomitable. Their serious miscalculation led to the inevitably catastrophic results. This lively Qur'an recounts the narratives of those societies and civilizations that are deliberately omitted from the public mind — the societies and commonwealths of Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ and Shu'ayb (ﷺ), as well as others that were decimated and wiped out.

The final stage of a nation's impending extinction is that of power, typically expressed in the form of military power. But military power is usually exercised within a nexus of other power configurations that serve to distance societies away from Allah (ﷻ) and move them ever nearer to their inevitable social and existential demise. In trying to get a handle on this nexus of power, consider some of the contemporary nation-state players that are now tied into the whirlpool of power that sank ancient societies.

The first component of this power nexus that seduces societies away from Allah (ﷻ) instead of bringing them nearer to Him is the power of energy (solar, wind, fossil-fuel, nuclear, etc). As energy is the feedstock of material abundance and personal choice, unless much more energy is generated, hundreds of millions more people will have to endure hunger, disease, discomfort, and physical and

mental confinement than do at present. In other words, if energy continues to be produced in the same way as now and from the same resources, more and more people will suffer.

Controlling wasteful and frivolous uses of energy would help, but ultimately, new innovations would need to capture more of the essentially boundless radiation of the Sun to escape the dilemma. But that is another story, a story in which the poor nations facilitate a beneficial outcome by refusing to follow the path mapped out by the rich ones; in which the poor do not have to scrape for trifling amounts; in which the militaries do not greedily overconsume energy as if there were no tomorrow; and in which incentives for businesses to produce and stay with conventional fossil fuels do not overwhelm the gestures made to encourage unconventional renewable fuels.<sup>335</sup>

An energy map, which shows how dependent a country is on outside supplies at current levels of energy use, also indicates how dependent many poor ones are on traditional fuels. These — wood, and animal and vegetable wastes — while doing something to alleviate scarcity in the short run, only increase and aggravate other environmental and social problems. In some countries, these traditional fuels are very nearly the sole source of energy: wood alone accounts for more than nine-tenths of the fuels used in Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ivory Coast, Mali, Rwanda, Somalia, and Tanzania in Africa, and also in Nepal. In other states, although these traditional fuels fall below the arbitrarily chosen 50% cut-off point on such an energy map, they are still hugely important. In Brazil, India, Pakistan, and Tunisia, for example, they supply more than one-third of the energy used. International trade in energy is primarily trade in oil and gas and their derivatives (64% of the total) and secondarily in coal (31%).<sup>336</sup>

Next comes what may be termed as “food energy.” As the example of Japan demonstrates, eating well does not necessarily depend on growing one’s own food, even one’s own staple cereals. But, on the other hand, as the same Japanese rice lobby loudly proclaims, and the example of pre-invaded Iraq underlines, dependence on imports for one’s staple food opens up a country to external pres-

sure. “Food,” said a combative US agriculture secretary in the early-1980s, “is a weapon. It is now one of the principal weapons in our negotiating kit.”<sup>337</sup>

Average agricultural yields differ wildly from state to state, depending on land, climatic, social, and technical conditions. They ranged, at the end of the 1980s, from 6,650 kg/hectare in the Netherlands down to 380 in Angola. This leaves plenty of room for improvement in the world as a whole. But no conceivable growth in productivity, even coupled with an extension of acreage, will make all states as currently configured self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency in food production does not automatically guarantee an adequate diet, or even freedom from hunger (more on this below).<sup>338</sup>

A third kind of power is industrial power. Although much of what is produced and exported in the world is made by nationals for foreign owners, no one knows how much. Ownership and control are shy, self-effacing creatures; they like to disappear into the background. This is particularly true in manufacturing. From 1950–1985, the world output of goods increased five-fold, and exports nine-fold. Manufacturing output in particular rose seven times and exports 16 times. Exports of manufactured items from “developing” countries (primarily Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and, some lagging way behind, Brazil and Mexico) rose from 11.16% of the total in 1966 to 13.83% in 1986, and the share of US majority-owned affiliates in these countries’ exports rose from 3.9–7.2% in the same period.<sup>339</sup>

The share of manufacturing exports controlled by all US firms — minority and majority owned — must be even greater, and growing even faster; and by inference, US control over industrial production must be tending the same way. All of this reinforces the conclusion that the United States’ economic might is far greater than one would expect from looking at its negative trade balance.<sup>340</sup>

The little that is known about other industrial states confirms this picture. Japanese affiliates increased their share of “developing” country exports of manufactured items by more than half between 1974–1983, and in general, the results for Swedish firms were quite similar to those for US affiliates. Since the rest of the rich industrial

pack cannot be far behind, there is little reason to doubt that industrial power on a world scale is even more concentrated than would appear from available information.<sup>341</sup>

Nations also have what is called service power. Services are usually intangible, and their production and consumption generally take place simultaneously. As conventionally defined they include wholesale and retail trade, all transport of people and freight, communications and information-related activities, business and professional services, banking and financial services (including insurance), and personal, community, and social services. Even more than in the case of tangible goods, they are difficult to record, difficult to measure, and difficult to compare across countries and through time. But they are clearly growing as a proportion of world employment, as a share of world trade (if not of world production) and as an arena for foreign direct investment. They account for sizable proportions of the foreign direct investments for the major trading states: 52% of Japan's, 47% of Germany's and Australia's, 44% of the United States', 36% of Britain's, 29% of Canada's and 27% of the Netherlands'.<sup>342</sup>

Another nuance in the overall scheme of power is called "science power." Not everyone would choose to measure science output by the number of articles published in scientific journals, or gauge the influence of a scientific observation by the number of references to an article in subsequent journal articles, but since the scientists themselves do this, by referring to it, albeit reluctantly, there may be something valuable to be gained from such analysis.<sup>343</sup>

Although the method is venerable — an article published in 1917 analyzed over 6,000 publications in comparative anatomy that appeared from 1543–1860 — it is not without problems. In its modern guise it owes much of its acceptance to the existence of a voluminous database at the Institute of Scientific Information in the United States: the Scientific Citation Index (SCI), which covers some 3,500 journals and a few hundred monographs, collections, and so on worldwide, with an annual total close to 500,000 papers. Many institutions use, and customize, the ISI's unique and growing archive, notably the influential CHI Research Inc (also in

the US); the Information Science and Scientometric Research Unit in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest, Hungary); and the Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex (United Kingdom). Much of what they do is illuminating. Essentially, though, there is a single source for the raw data. Its biases are necessarily shared. These biases stem from the selection of journals that make up the SCI sample, from its treatment of authorship, from the choice of citation conventions, and from a host of other factors, big and small, that make for local variants of the international scientific culture.<sup>344</sup>

A study completed in 1980 found that the USA and the UK are favored as against all other states — perceptibly as against Germany and France, grossly as against Japan and the previous USSR, and overwhelmingly as against the poor countries. The SCI sample allocated to the United States nearly twice the proportion of journals it could claim in the science serials catalogue at the British Library's Lending Division (38.8% as against 20.1%). For the UK, the discrepancy was 15.3% as against 12.5%, for Germany 9.9% as against 8.2%; France came out evenly at 5.2%. But the USSR scored 3.2% and 6.1%, and the rest of the world 24.0% and 39.2%, respectively. Other studies show different results in detail but point in the same general direction: English-language states are overrepresented, the others underrepresented; Latin script is favored, as against other scripts; disciplines with a relatively dispersed literature (biology and mathematics, for example) fare worse than those with a few major journals (physics and earth space, or engineering and technology).<sup>345</sup>

Nonetheless, the overall conclusion is clear: the United States is the science superpower, Japan is a rapidly rising sun, and there is a very small cluster of European contenders. The future of science lies in research and development. Although the US is again the big spender here, its margin is not so wide, especially if unproductive military research and development is excluded.<sup>346</sup>

Another constituent of the power index that intoxicates societies into their demise is the rich and poor index. In a 1983 count, the US Federal Reserve Board concluded that there were roughly



eight million affluent families in the United States (by its own definition, these were families with a net worth of \$250,000 and an annual income of \$75,000). The rich, with assets of a million dollars and an annual income of \$200,000, numbered 600,000, 15 per thousand households; and the truly rich, with assets of \$10 million or more, numbered 70,000, less than one per thousand. Such figures in the context of the time are awesome.<sup>347</sup>

Not long after, in 1988, about 32 million Americans were thought to be living below the official poverty line of \$6,000 for a single person, nearly eight million more than in the late-1970s when dole queues were as long; this was 13% of the population compared with 11.5% ten years earlier. Nearly one-third of all African Americans and over one-quarter of Hispanics were amongst the poor. Almost a fifth of all children, including 44% of African-American children and 38% of Hispanic children, are poor. Such figures are equally awesome. The United States is not the worst offender. Among the 40 nations for which there are data, it ranks about one-third down the income disparity list. So if it scores the highest infant mortality rate of any OECD country (barring Portugal and Greece), or if parts of New York boast a life expectancy at birth lower than Bangladesh, its citizens may yet rejoice, as their level of inequality is only one-third that of Brazil.<sup>348</sup>

Inequality rules. It flourishes as the world market system deepens and spreads. One of the most obvious results of communism's collapse in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s was the emergence of sharper public disparities in income. The uniform drabness and common oppression that prevailed under the old *nomenklatura* quickly gave way — under the new *priviligentsia*, more often than not first cousins or closer of the old rulers — to many layers of differentiation between those with a place in the world market and those without, between those who can command a rent and those who cannot. Poles have been forced further apart, as have Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Russians, and the rest. There, and throughout the world, a growing underclass of redundants (superfluous, no longer needed or useful), in fact if not by official admission, is forming alongside and outside the realm of “substance.”<sup>349</sup>

The gulf between countries is appreciably smaller than is conventionally depicted. That is because comparisons are usually drawn on the basis of GNP per head, without taking into account the different price levels prevailing between different countries and, therefore, the differing purchasing power of money. More generally the population of poor countries, while still desperately poor, are measurably closer to rich populations when real GDP per person is used in the comparison, than when the conventional GNP per head is used: for example, in GNP terms China's and India's income per head is only 1.6% of the USA's, but 12% and 6% respectively in real GDP terms. Billionaires, however, are a different class altogether. They inhabit a single world with common prices and a single currency — the US dollar.<sup>350</sup>

And finally there is the index of hunger that enlivens the expectations of nations in their state of power preceding collapse. People seldom go hungry because there is not enough food. More often it is because they cannot command an adequate share of what food exists, or the material and cultural resources to make good nutritional use of what they might find before them. This explains the not so unusual spectacle of hunger amid bumper harvests, as in the Bengal famine of 1943, the Bangladeshi famine of 1974, and some of the famines in Africa in the 1990s — “boom-famines” during which people starve because they are out of work and moneyless, or because normal arrangements for the distribution of food have collapsed.<sup>351</sup>

So self-sufficiency, is only part of the food story, the part relating to the power of the state. The other part, of greater immediate relevance to the citizen, is access to what food exists, which has to do with a state's effectiveness. The presence, or absence, of famine is the most public test of that effectiveness. But famine is not the worst that the state can inflict on the poor. Take the contrasting experience of India and China, the two population super-states. India has not undergone a major famine since independence in 1947. China, by contrast, has (1958–1961) — when the government's Great Leap Forward to industrialization plunged the country into the worst famine ever to have been recorded, with 23–30 million victims. Yet adjusted for population size and composition,

there are some 3.9 million extra deaths a year in India as compared with China — every 6–8 years more people die in India from hunger-related causes than in the gigantic Chinese disaster. Who is to say which is worse?<sup>352</sup>

Food is scarce in much of Africa and getting scarcer. Famines are frequent. Its new rulers have acquired a “global palate,” a taste for expensive foreign foods, to match their taste for expensive imported consumer durables. Shortages of foreign exchange have prompted them to concentrate on non-nutritional cash crops that can be sold abroad. The consequent decline of the countryside as a provider of food has been compounded by policies to keep food cheap for the urban populace, with the result that farmers are deprived of adequate incentives and thus are forced to migrate into the towns.<sup>353</sup>

These are examples of the many nations whose preoccupations and policies condemn millions to permanent undernourishment while other nations do not know where to turn to offload their accumulated surplus stocks of food. The world is capable of feeding decently all its inhabitants. That it is conspicuously not doing so at present is the product not of necessity but of choice. World hunger is nothing new; it is simply getting worse. Many things — glitches in food production or distribution, a rise in unemployment, disruption caused by war, civil commotion, a change in government policy — can tip widespread chronic hunger into famine (not that famine itself is so clear-cut). It is only when large numbers gathered together are publicly seen to be missing the barest necessities of food that the record of death is ascribed to starvation rather than a more morally neutral or euphemistically named disease.<sup>354</sup>

When a “superpower” calculates and configures these worldwide variables into its seemingly never-say-die power structure it thinks that it occupies the summit of perpetuity. Before anyone else, such a supposedly eternal power configuration needs to listen closely,

**Can, then, the people of any society ever feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them by night, while they are asleep? Or, can the people of any**

society ever feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them in broad daylight, while they are engaged in [worldly] amusement? Can they, then, ever feel secure from Allah's profound plans? But none feels secure from Allah's profound plans save people who are [already] lost. Has it, then, not become obvious to those who have inherited the earth in the wake of former generations that, if We so willed, We could smite them [too] by means of their sins, sealing their hearts so that they cannot hear [the truth about this matter]?

Unto those [earlier] societies — some of whose narratives We [now] relate to you [O Muhammad] — there had indeed come apostles of their own with all evidences [pertaining to Allah's authority and power]; but they would not commit themselves to anything to which they had once contradicted: thus it is that Allah seals the hearts of those who deny the truth [relevant to His authority and power]; and in most of them We found no bond with anything that is divinely reasoned and validated — and most of them We found to be iniquitous indeed (7:97–102).

Allah (ﷻ) has spoken the truth, and He has demonstrated the truth in the lives of previous nations and civilizations as well as in the current affairs of contemporary nations and civilizations.

## Mūsá (ﷺ) Challenges the Pharaoh of Egypt

This is the sixth story of the rise of societies and fall of civilizations that is mentioned in *Sūrah al-A'rāf*. The body of information in this lesson adds to the knowledge and wisdom given in the previous *āyāt* concerning this historical ascent and downfall of cultures. The *āyāt* (demonstrations of Allah's power) presented by Mūsá (ﷺ) to his people and their enemies were more awesome than those of the preceding prophets. It appears that the ingenuousness and ignorance of Pharaoh's officialdom superseded previous peoples and erstwhile establishments. It also appears that Mūsá possessed a unique feature that previous Prophets (ﷺ) did not: the capability to speak to and interact with two different societies, the Israeli and the Egyptian.

- (7:103) And after those [early people] We sent Moses with Our [power] messages to Pharaoh and his elite, and they willfully rejected them: and behold what happened in the end to those spreaders of corruption!
- (7:104) And Moses said, "O Pharaoh! Verily, I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds,
- (7:105) "So constituted that I cannot say anything about Allah but the truth. I have now come to you with a clear evidence from your Sustainer: let, then, the Children of Israel go with me!"
- (7:106) Said [Pharaoh], "If you have come with a sign [of power], produce it — if you are a man of truth!"
- (7:107) Thereupon [Moses] threw down his staff, and lo! it was a serpent, plainly visible;
- (7:108) And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it appeared [shining] white to the beholders.
- (7:109) The elites among Pharaoh's people said, "Verily, this is indeed a sorcerer of great knowledge,
- (7:110) "Who wants to drive you out of your land!" [Said Pharaoh], "What, then, do you advise?"
- (7:111) They answered, "Let him and his brother wait awhile, and send to all cities heralds,

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا  
 فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَتْ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَنْفِرْعَوْنَ  
 إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ حَقِيقٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا  
 الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بَيْنَةً مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾  
 قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾  
 فَأَلْقَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بِيضَاءُ  
 لِلنَّظِيرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾  
 يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ  
 وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ يَا تَأُتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سِحْرِ عَلِيمٍ ﴿١١٢﴾  
 وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ  
 ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ  
 تُلْقَىٰ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالَ أَلْقُوا فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا  
 سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١١٦﴾  
 وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾  
 فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فغلبوا هنالك وأنقلبوا

صَاعِرِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَأَلْقَى السَّحْرَةَ سَاحِدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ قَالُوا ءَأَمَّا رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
﴿١٢١﴾ رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَأَمَنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَأَذَنْ  
لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَكْرَتُهُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِيُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا ءَأَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لَأَقْطَعَنَّ ءَأَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خَلْفٍ ثُمَّ لَأُضِلِّيَنَّكُمْ  
أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا نُنْقِمُ مِّنَّا إِلَّا  
أَنْ ءَأَمْنَا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاءَتْنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا  
مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَنْذَرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا  
فِي الْءَأَرْضِ وَيَذَرَكَ وَءَأَهْلَتَكَ قَالَ سَنُقْبِلُ ءَأَبْنَءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ  
وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ ءَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِءَأَلَلَّهِ  
وَءَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّ ءَأَلَّ ءَأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَن يَشَاءُ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ  
وَءَأَلْعَبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ قَالُوا أُوذِينَا مِن قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمِن  
بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ  
وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي ءَأَلَّ ءَأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾  
وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا ءَأَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ مَنِ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ءَأَحْسَنَةُ قَالُوا لِنَا هَذِهِ وَإِن تُصِبَّهُمْ

سَيِّئَةٌ يَطِيرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّمَا طَائِرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ  
أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِنَسْحَرَنَّ بِهَا  
فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ  
وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالِدَّمَ ۗ آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا  
مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ  
بِمَا عَاهَدَ عِنْدَكَ لِئِن كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ  
مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْزَ إِلَى  
أَجَلٍ هُمْ بَلِغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ فَأَنْقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي  
الْيَمِّ بِآيَاتِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثْنَا  
الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضَعُونَ مَشْرِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمغربَهَا  
الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا ۗ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ  
بِمَا صَبَرُوا ۗ وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانِ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا  
كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾



- (7:112) “Who shall bring before you every sorcerer of great knowledge.”
- (7:113) And the sorcerers came to Pharaoh [and] said, “Verily, we ought to have a great reward if it is we who prevail.”
- (7:114) Answered [Pharaoh], “Yes; and, verily, you shall be among those who are near to me.”
- (7:115) They said, “O Moses! Either you shall throw [your staff first], or we shall [be the first to] throw.”
- (7:116) He answered, “You throw [first].” And when they threw down [their staves], they cast a spell upon the people’s eyes, and struck them with awe, and produced mighty sorcery.
- (7:117) And [then] We inspired Moses, “Throw down your staff!” — and lo! it swallowed up all their deceptions:
- (7:118) Whereupon the truth was established, and vain was proved all that they had been doing.
- (7:119) And thus were they vanquished there and then, and became utterly humiliated.
- (7:120) And down fell the sorcerers, prostrating themselves
- (7:121) [And] exclaiming, “We have come to believe in and commit to the Sustainer of all the worlds,
- (7:122) “The Sustainer of Moses and Aaron!”
- (7:123) Said Pharaoh, “Have you come to believe in him before I have given you permission? Behold, this is indeed a plot you have cunningly devised in this [my] city in order to drive out its people hence! But in time you shall come to know [my revenge]:
- (7:124) “Most certainly shall I cut off your hands and your feet in great numbers, because of [your] perverseness, and then I shall most certainly crucify you in great numbers, all together!”
- (7:125) They answered, “Verily, unto our Sustainer do we turn —
- (7:126) “For you take vengeance on us only because we have acceded to our Sustainer’s messages [of power] as soon as they came to us. O our Sustainer! Shower us with patience

in adversity, and make us die as men who have surrendered themselves unto You!”

- (7:127) And the elites among Pharaoh’s people said, “Will you allow Moses and his people to spread corruption on earth, and to [cause your people to] forsake you and your gods?” Pharaoh replied, “We shall slay their sons in great numbers and shall spare [only] their women: for, verily, we hold sway over them!”
- (7:128) [And] Moses said to his people, “Turn to Allah for aid, and have patience in adversity. Verily, all the earth belongs to Allah: He gives it as a heritage to such as He wills of His subjects; and the future belongs to people conscious [of Allah’s power presence]!”
- (7:129) [But] they [the Children of Israel] said, “We had been hurt before you came to us and since you have come to us!” [Moses] replied, “It may well be that your Sustainer will destroy your foe and make you inherit the earth: and thereupon He will behold how you act.”
- (7:130) And most certainly did We overwhelm Pharaoh’s people with drought and scarcity of fruits, so that they might take it to heart.
- (7:131) But whenever good fortune alighted upon them, they would say, “This is [but] our due”; and whenever affliction befell them, they would blame their evil fortune on Moses and those who followed him. Oh, verily, their [evil] fortune had been decreed by Allah — but most of them knew it not.
- (7:132) And they said [to Moses], “Whatever sign [of power] you may produce before us in order to cast a spell upon us thereby, we shall not trust you!”
- (7:133) Thereupon We let loose upon them floods, and [plagues of] locusts, and lice, and frogs, and [water turning into] blood — distinct signs [all]; but they gloried in their arrogance, for they were people lost in sin.
- (7:134) And whenever a plague struck them, they would cry, “O Moses, pray for us to your Sustainer on the strength

of the covenant [of prophethood] He has made with you! If you remove this plague from us, we will truly believe in you, and will let the Children of Israel go with you!”

- (7:135) But whenever We removed the plague from them, giving them time to make good their promise, lo!, they would break their word.
- (7:136) And so We inflicted Our retribution on them, and caused them to drown in the sea, because they had given the lie to Our [power] messages and had been heedless of them;
- (7:137) Whereas to the people who [in the past] had been deemed utterly low, We gave as their heritage the eastern and western parts of the land that We had blessed. And [thus] your Sustainer’s good promise to the Children of Israel was fulfilled as a result of their patience in adversity; whereas We utterly destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had wrought, and all that they had built (al-A'rāf:103–137).

Mūsá’s name is mentioned more than 130 times in this consummate Qur’an. Since his very birth, when the henchmen of Pharaoh were killing Israeli newborns and sparing Israeli women, his lifetime was one of events that were spectacular, astonishing, and riveting. The following list provides a brief overview of the major *āyāt* in the Qur’an wherein Mūsá (ﷺ) is cited:

1. In the gripping social predicament at the time he was born, Mūsá’s mother placed him in a hamper to float over the water of the Nile River. Then it became a matter of Allah’s will for Mūsá to be returned to his own mother to be breastfed. This narrative of Mūsá (ﷺ) with his mother and sister is found in *Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:7–13) and *ṬāHa* (20:38–40).
2. Mūsá (ﷺ) left Egypt for the land of Madyan when he was still a young man; he had to escape Egypt because otherwise he would have been accused without due process of killing an Egyptian in support of a Hebrew. This narrative is located in *Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:15–21) and *ṬāHa* (20:40).
3. Mūsá (ﷺ) drew water for two of Shu‘ayb’s (ﷺ) daughters (28:22–25), and then married into Shu‘ayb’s family circle

(20:41, 28:26–38). As a bride price for marrying Shu‘ayb’s daughter, Mūsá performed shepherding duties for 10 years in the vicinity of the holy valley of Ṭuwá.

4. Mūsá (ﷺ) went out to seek fire to secure warmth for his people, *Sūrahs ṬāHa* (20:6–36, 42–47), *al-Furqān* (25:35–36), *al-Shu‘arā’* (26:10–16), *al-Naml* (27:7–12), *al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:29–35, 45–46), *al-Sajdah* (32:23–25), and *al-Nāzi‘āt* (79:15–19).
5. Mūsá returned to Egypt with his brother Hārūn (ﷺ) to try to convince Pharaoh of Allah’s word and will, *Sūrahs al-A‘rāf* (7:104–105) and *al-Shu‘arā’* (26:17–22).
6. Mūsá (ﷺ) tried reasoning with Pharaoh about the sustaining power of the Lord and presented him with divine power manifestations that authenticated his prophethood, *Sūrahs ṬāHa* (20:55) and *al-Shu‘arā’* (26:24–28). But Pharaoh arrogantly snubbed the divinity of Allah, ascribing divinity to himself while giving orders to build a ladder to heaven so that he could ascertain God for himself, *Sūrahs al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:38) and *Ghāfir* where Allah (ﷻ) says,

**And Pharaoh said, “O Hāmān! Build me a post so that I may be able to reach the determining factors — the determining factors of the heavens — so I may have access to the god of Moses; for I think he is a liar...” (40:36–37).**

7. Mūsá (ﷺ) demonstrated the miracles of his staff and hand in front of Pharaoh, *Sūrahs al-A‘rāf* (7:106–126), *Yūnus* (10:75–89), *ṬāHa* (20:57–76), and *al-Shu‘arā’* (26:29–52).
8. Allah (ﷻ) describes the reaction of Pharaoh and his people as they pursue their perversion and take a firm stand of denying God’s power, *Sūrahs al-A‘rāf* (7:107–129) and *Ghāfir* (40:23–27).
9. Pharaoh plotted to kill Mūsá (ﷺ), but a surreptitious committed Muslim came to the latter’s defense, *Sūrah Ghāfir* (40:28–35, 38–46). Pharaoh’s derision of Mūsá is cited in *Sūrahs al-Zukhruf* (43:51–54) and *al-Nāzi‘āt* (79:22–26).

10. When Pharaoh and his court were final in their objection and opposition of Mūsá (ﷺ) they were given nine demonstrations of Allah's punishment power: drought, money scarcity, a population reduction, dearth of agricultural produce, the overflow of water, locusts, lice, frogs, and water turning into blood. Other "power presentations" or *āyāt* performed by Mūsá included his staff, the parting of the sea, and the gushing of 12 cascades of water out of rock (7:159–160). The nine power demonstrations of punishment are mentioned in *Sūrahs al-A'rāf* (7:130–135), *al-Isrā'* (17:101–102), *ṬāHa* (20:59), *al-Naml* (27:13–14), *al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:36–37), *al-Zukhruf* (43:46–50), *al-Qamar* (54:41–42), and *al-Nāẓi'āt* (79:20–21). The drowning of Pharaoh and his elite in the Red Sea is referenced in *Sūrahs al-A'rāf* (7:136–137), *Yūnus* (10:90–92), *al-Isrā'* (17:103–104), *ṬāHa* (20:77–79), *al-Shu'arā'* (26:52–68), *al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:39–40), *al-Zukhruf* (43:55–56), *al-Dukhān* (44:17–31), and *al-Dhāriyāt* (51:38–40).
11. Pharaoh's claim of divinity stands as a flaming rejoinder for all who would contemplate such heresy, brushing off with arrogance the prophets and pushing aside their messages, *Sūrahs Hūd* (11:96–99), *al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:41–42), *Ghāfir* (40:45–52), and *al-Dukhān* (44:43–50).
12. It was during the time of Mūsá (ﷺ) that the Children of Israel imitated the paganism of the Egyptians; the only ones who followed Mūsá were a lifeline of people from his own Israeli society, but even they were still afraid of Pharaoh lest he cause them to return to the Egyptian way of life. At times these Israeli believers asked Mūsá to assign them deities parallel to the deities of the idolaters. They also wanted to exchange the "milk and honey" status they had received from divine providence for grain, onions, garlic, and legumes. This is mentioned in *Sūrahs al-Baqarah* and *al-A'rāf*,

**We will not be patient with [having] one type of food (2:61);**

Designate for us [the Israelis] a god in the manner that they [the Egyptians] have gods... (7:138).

13. Mūsá (ﷺ) left the Children of Israel to meet with his Sustainer at a given time, whereupon he received the tablets of written commandments for them to abide by,

And [then] We appointed for Moses thirty nights [on Mt. Sinai]; and We added to them ten, whereby the term of forty nights set by his Sustainer was fulfilled. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, “Take my place among my people; and act righteously, and follow not the path of the spreaders of corruption.” And when Moses came [to Mt. Sinai] at the time set by Us, and his Sustainer spoke to him, he said, “O my Sustainer! Show [Yourself] to me, so that I might behold You!” Said [Allah], “Never can you see Me. However, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then — only then — will you see Me. And as soon as his Sustainer revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust; and Moses fell down in a swoon. And when he regained his consciousness, he said, “Limitless are You in Your glory! Unto You do I turn in repentance; and I shall [always] be the first to commit to You!”

Said [Allah], “O Moses! Behold, I have raised you above all people by virtue of the [power] messages I have entrusted to you, and by virtue of My speaking [to you]: hold fast, therefore, to what I have vouchsafed you, and be among the grateful!” And We ordained for him in the tablets [of the Law] all manner of admonition, clearly spelling out everything. And [We said], “Hold fast to them with [all your] strength, and bid your people to hold fast to their most goodly rules.

“I will show you the way the iniquitous shall go. From My [power] messages shall I cause to turn away all those who, without any right, behave haughtily on earth: for, though they may see every sign [of the truth], they do not commit to it, and though they may see the path of rectitude, they do not choose to follow it; whereas, if they see a path of error, they take it for their own: this, because they have given the lie to Our [power] messages, and have remained heedless of them.” Hence, all who give the lie to Our [power] messages, and [thus] to the truth of the life to come, in vain shall be all their doings: [for] are they to be rewarded for anything other than what they were wont to do? (7:142–147).

14. During the time Mūsá (ﷺ) was absent from his people, al-Sāmirī denominated a calf as a deity for the Children of Israel — to be worshiped and idolized. This man-made deity was crafted out of the gold he had collected from the Israeli women’s jewelry; it was fashioned and built in such a way that the wind and sand would give it a sound that is orotund and shrill, as is the sound of an ox. Al-Sāmirī imputed that this was their deity as well as the deity of Moses, however Aaron was not successful in parting them from this deity, “[But] they [the Israelis] said, ‘We will continue to attend to it [the idol-deity] until Moses returns to us.’” (20:91). After Mūsá returned to see what was going on in his absence, he was seriously upset with his brother Hārūn (ﷺ), whom he grabbed by his head and beard and dragged. Hārūn apologized saying that he tried his best to dissuade them from what they had done. Then Mūsá admonished al-Sāmirī who,

Said [al-Sāmirī], “I have gained insight into something they were unable to see: and so I took hold of a handful of the apostle’s teachings and cast it

away: for thus has my mind prompted me [to act]” (20:96).

And so, Mūsá punished him by banishment and exile. This story of the golden calf is noted in *Sūrahs al-Baqarah* (2:54, 92–93), *al-A‘raf* (7:148–154), and *ṬāHa* (20:84–98).

15. When the Children of Israel realized the seriousness of their sin to idolize the golden calf, Mūsá (ﷺ) chose 70 men who would go with him to the location on Mt. Ṭūr (this is either the same as Mt. Sinai, or a hillock on Mt. Sinai) where he usually communed with Allah (ﷻ). There they would declare their sin, vow to obey Allah, and regret and repent from ever doing such a thing. After Allah spoke to Mūsá, even as some of them were aware of this extraordinary event, it only took a short while for the habit of sinning to return to the Children of Israel as they were prone to the social dysfunction of defaulting on their pledges and disobeying the Almighty. They would even go to the extent of questioning Moses’ prophethood and doubting the fact that the Torah was revealed to him. As they were all immersed in their intractable denial they were finally overtaken and destroyed by a thunderbolt, at which point a new generation arose due to Mūsá’s pleading and petition with Allah for a people who could honor the divine Covenant. After showing his people all manner of miracles, after delivering them to safety and security from their mortal enemy, Pharaoh, and after spending decades giving them divine guidance — all to no avail — Mūsá was finally resigned to his society being relieved of its fools’ acts. This narrative is covered in *Sūrahs al-Baqarah* (2:55–56) and *al-A‘raf* (7:155–157). In the Qur’an, there are numerous reminders from Allah to the Children of Israel about how He privileged and favored them, *Sūrahs al-Baqarah* (2:47–57, 60–61), *al-A‘raf* (7:141), and *Ibrāhīm* (14:6–8).
16. Allah (ﷻ) instructed Mūsá to tell the Children of Israel to enter the Holy Land, which is Palestine — the promised land. The Israelis rebelled against these orders, and hence, the Holy



- Land became forbidden to them. They thus had to endure an exile, being geographically displaced from the time they left Egypt with Mūsá (ﷺ) until the time he passed on. Afterward, they crossed the Jordan River, settling in Jericho and its environs for a period of time. This narrative is recounted in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5:20–26). During their desert exile Allah chronicles in *Sūrahs al-Baqarah* (2:63–64) and *al-A'rāf* (7:171) that a mountain was lifted over these Children of Israel until it appeared as a canopy over their heads, giving them the impression that it was on the verge of collapsing over them. Amidst this unsettling tribulation, they were ordered to adhere to Allah's commands with all their heart, all their mind, and all their determination, without complaints and without excuses.
17. Mūsá's efforts with the Children of Israel were mostly in vain. With all the miraculous and paranormal events related to the cow incident, which was covered in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2:67–74), the Children of Israel still could not respond to Allah's power presence as they should. Their hearts remained untouched — as if they were stones or even more impenetrable than stone. It also turns out that Mūsá (ﷺ) was stung and scarred by the Children of Israel: they accused him of a deformity (swollen testicles) of which he was cleared, *Sūrahs al-Aḥzāb* (33:69) and *al-Ṣaff* (61:5).
  18. Mūsá (ﷺ) engaged the wealthy and overbearing Qārūn with unassailable arguments from scripture. The consequence of Qārūn's social misbehavior turned out to be a quake that buried him and his residence as well as the enemies of Mūsá. His story is introduced in *Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ* (28:76–83).
  19. Mūsá (ﷺ) had a very powerful and meaningful encounter with a virtuous subject of Allah (ﷺ), *Sūrah al-Kahf* (18:60–82).<sup>355</sup>
  20. Allah (ﷻ) has esteemed both Mūsá and Hārūn (ﷺ), *Sūrahs Maryam* (19:51–53), *al-Ṣaffāt* (37:114–122), and *Ghāfir* (40:53–54).<sup>356</sup>

### Tyrants Survive by Downplaying God's Authority

This backdrop into the life of Mūsá (ﷺ) is pertinent to easing into the climate of this lesson. The laws revealed to Mūsá are, in a sense, parallel to the laws revealed to Muhammad (ﷺ). However, the human experiences of the people of Mūsá were tumultuous, maladjusted, and at times rancorous; hence the laws of Mūsá, even though they contributed to a “civil culture,” were applied only at limited times and places. This is because the dynamics between Mūsá and the Children of Israel, which may be rounded out as follows, were for the most part contentious and combative,

1. Allah (ﷻ) rescued Mūsá from the deadly policies of Pharaoh while he was still a baby. To save him, his mother placed him in a floating basket on the river water. Then, as Allah willed it, Mūsá (ﷺ) was returned to his biological mother so that she may breastfeed him. This is how, even in seemingly intractable circumstances, Allah's will comes through on the wings of mercy and care.
2. Mūsá (ﷺ), who in later life would become a prime prophet with an iron will, was brought up in the high culture of Egyptian society, in the official “state” residence of Pharaoh.
3. Mūsá (ﷺ) left Egypt seeking asylum in another land on a “tip” from a distant person. This initial exit from Egypt under strained circumstances turned out to be for the better in the long run: Mūsá first joined the family of Prophet Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) through marriage and then himself became a prophet after receiving revelation from Allah (ﷻ). In hindsight, this transformational change of the future was contingent upon that word of advice to leave Egypt from an unsung man. This indicates that confidence in Allah — as Mūsá had — will have provided its return on investment, though it may come through unknown and unpredictable channels.
4. There can be no impact or influence by superpowers upon individuals who place their trust and lodge their unconditional confidence in Allah (ﷻ); in particular, therefore, the power and strength of Pharaoh and his elite could not harm Mūsá (ﷺ) in the least. Listen to the sharp exchange between Mūsá

and Pharaoh, who started off saying, **“But I am sure that you, O Mūsá, are bewitched...”** (17:101). After waiting patiently through Pharaoh’s argument, Mūsá courteously replied in a manner that only a prophet could,

**Answered [Mūsá], “You know well that none but the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth has bestowed these [miraculous power maneuvers] from on high, as a means of insight [for you]; and, verily, O Pharaoh, [since you have chosen to reject them] I think you are utterly lost!”** (17:102).

5. Divine relief always follows times of heightened hardship. The triumph of truth comes through after the standoff reaches its climax. One of the productive insights into the lifelong struggle of Mūsá (ﷺ) was the moment when a person belonging to the pharaonic elite, who had heretofore concealed his conscience-laden confirmation of the truth, presented his case in defense of Mūsá. At that moment, when Pharaoh was contemplating his options against Mūsá, this man, who at heart was a follower of Mūsá, presented a point of view that bolstered the divine argument being made by Mūsá,

**At that, a committed man of Pharaoh’s confidants, who [until then] had concealed his faith, exclaimed, “Would you slay a man because he says, “Allah is my Sustainer” — seeing, withal, that he has brought you all evidence of this truth from your Sustainer? (40:28).**

6. No temporal force can counter the heart that has been touched by Allah’s message; this is what gives people the courage and fortitude to endure the inevitable consequences. The sorcerers, when they were won over to Allah (ﷻ) and committed themselves to the message of Mūsá (ﷺ), did not “factor in” what Pharaoh would do to them in the way of harm and brutality.

7. Patience in the course of a struggle pays off. The Children of Israel were patient as they were forced to persevere through Pharaoh's policies of killing their babies and sparing their women; what followed was the "perfect relief,"

**And [thus] your Sustainer's good promise to the Children of Israel was fulfilled as a result of their patience in adversity; whereupon We utterly destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had wrought, and all that they had built (7:137).**

After this initial history of acrimony, the Children of Israel were subjected to the ruthlessness of the imperialist Roman Empire. As a result, their Temple was destroyed, and thereafter, they could never settle in a permanent way in Palestine. At one time they had a limited jurisdiction of Jericho. They subsequently moved toward Arabia and settled in Taymā', Wādī al-Qurá, Fadak, Khaybar, and Yathrib. There they built their communities and businesses, as well as their forts and garrisons, in anticipation of the Messiah, whom they had a sense would appear somewhere between the Ḥijāz in Arabia and Palestine.

8. Mūsá (ﷺ) demonstrated exceptional equanimity toward his own people, the Children of Israel. In one instance, the seniors of the Children of Israel came to him demanding to see God with their own eyes; in another instance they out-and-out worshiped a calf, but still Mūsá prayed to Allah (ﷻ) for their forgiveness,

**He prayed, "O my Sustainer! Had You so willed, You would have destroyed them before this, and me [with them]. Will You destroy us for what the weak-minded among us have done? [All] this is but a trial from You, whereby You allow to go astray whom You will, and guide aright whom You will, You are near to us: grant us, then, for-**

**giveness and have mercy on us — for You are the best of all forgivers! (7:155).**

In the stretch of time or in the course of history it is important in effect or meaning to understand Mūsá (ﷺ) in the context of the rise and fall of established earthly powers,

**And after those [early societies] We sent Mūsá with Our [power] messages to Pharaoh and his elite, and they willfully turned an opportunity into oppression: and behold what happened in the end to those spoilers (7:103).**

This scenario begins by the message of Allah (ﷻ) being delivered to Pharaoh and his royalty. It proceeds to the final decision of this official upper class of society, as well as its deserved consequence in their final destination in the world to come. These elitist officials and their Pharaoh torchbearer flippantly dismissed Allah's power presentations (miracles) and turned a prospect of ultimate salvation into procedures of discourtesy and policies of offensive activity. It may be worth noting in this context that the word *zulm* is used instead of *kufr*, which could be alluding to Pharaoh and his upper-class officials having the power to turn their *kufr* into *zulm*. In most, if not all, instances it is the exercise of power that translates a theoretical objection to the truth into a concrete opposition to its earthly representatives.

**“And behold what happened eventually to those corruptionists.”** Before thinking about what actually happens to such people in the final analysis, note that these divine descriptions — *spoilers*, *corruptionists*, or *dysfunctionals* — follow all people in power who express their theoretical opposition to God, their argumentative rejection of His Prophets (ﷺ), and their attitudinal renouncement of justice and equality. Life cannot come together in all its good components except on the basis of truth and justice. The definition of such truth and justice cannot be captured except with Allah's guidance and word. Usurpers of this fact, as they hide behind the facade of artificial authority and pretended power, will argue to the end

and fight to the finish against Allah's authentic authority and His precise power. They, by the very malfeasance of habituating themselves to ruling over people, know that if they were to concede Allah's authority they will have to concede His power.

The willful exercise of power with the objective of oppressing others is what they are good at, but proficiency at wrongdoing, especially in the area of power and wealth, is what Allah's prophets came to correct. And so, were they to accede to Allah's power prerogative, their basic proficiency would be meaningless. Thus, to hold on to their business of power as well as their power of business they put up a battle royal against Allah's value system and system of rules. In essence, this is what destroys societies and causes the collapse of civilizations. Liberation in the true meaning of the word comes when man no longer regards czars, emperors, monarchs, and moguls to be necessary. Any person possessing concentrated power and excessive authority, who subjects people to his will and diktat to the exclusion of God and His authority and power, has joined the retinue of expired *mufsid*s, all of whom had their own ways of stringing out their ungodly policies and anti-godly procedures.

### People in Power Do Not (Peacefully) Give Up Their Privileges

And Mūsá said, "O Pharaoh! Verily, I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds, so constituted that I cannot say anything about Allah but the truth. I have now come to you with a clear evidence from your Sustainer: let, then, the Children of Israel go with me!" Said [Pharaoh], "If you have come with a sign [of power], produce it — if you are a man of truth!" Thereupon [Mūsá] threw down his staff, and lo! it was a serpent, plainly visible; and he drew forth his hand, and lo! it appeared [shining] white to the beholders. The elites among Pharaoh's people said, "Verily, this is indeed a sorcerer of great knowledge, who wants to drive you out of your land!" [Said Pharaoh],

**“What, then, do you advise?” They answered, “Let him and his brother wait awhile, and send to all cities heralds who shall bring before you every sorcerer of great knowledge” (7:104–112).**

This is a defining moment indeed. It is the moment that many of today’s “Islamists” run away from, and that others want to befuddle. It is also a moment that is misread and misinterpreted by the erstwhile speakers in many sections of today’s Islamic movement. In essence, this is the moment when Allah’s prophet and people face off against the deniers of Allah (ﷻ). This is the moment when there is a standoff between affirming Allah and His power and denying God and His power. This is when the two opposing forces crystallize around Allah the Sustainer on one side, and God being anything but sustainer,

**And Mūsá said, “O Pharaoh! Verily, I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds, so constituted that I cannot say anything about Allah but the truth. I have now come to you with a distinct validation from your Sustainer: let, then, the Children of Israel go with me!” (7:104–105).**

Some status-quo *dā’īs* are going to have to pay close attention. The words of the Qur’an are, **“O Pharaoh!”** Mūsá (ﷺ) did not say, “Your majesty” or “Your excellency” or any of these other titles used by the “second-hand” Islamists of today. The words “Your majesty” or “Your excellency” are expressed by individuals who do not honor the full majesty and the full excellency of Allah (ﷻ). Mūsá, as should all committed Muslims, spoke to Pharaoh with a superior psychology — in a way that beams with confidence, to tell him the truth. The truth itself needs a psychology that can express it without jitters or flutters. Besides, this encounter is about the most important element in the survival of societies: Allah’s legitimacy and power. So Mūsá said to Pharaoh, **“Indeed, I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds...”** This would mean, and

Pharaoh understood this better than some Muslims nowadays, that Pharaoh has no authority and no power. Indirectly, this was a verbal slap in the face of his majesty.

**“I am such that I cannot say anything but the truth. I have come to you with confirmation from my Sustainer.”** And for this reason he was an apostle who found within himself the truth about Allah and could only express that truth without “cutting corners” or “playing games.” When he said he was an apostle from the Sustainer of the worlds, he was not joking, and he was not pretending.

In the liveliness and practical intent of this truth, Mūsá (ﷺ) asked Pharaoh to release the Children of Israel from his legal bondage, from his civic order, and from his den of slavery so that they may settle in a land of freedom and a domain of justice. In man’s state of nature, as Allah (ﷻ) created and intended man to be, the Children of Israel were His subordinates. They need not be, nor could they be the subordinates of Pharaoh himself. Man cannot have two overlords or masters, especially if they are giving him conflicting directions; he cannot obey two chiefs and conductors; he cannot yield to two deities and divinities. Once a man becomes a subject and subordinate of Allah, he cannot be a subject and subordinate of someone else. Pharaoh, who was getting away with his imposed authority on the Children of Israel, now had to come to terms with Moses’ words of truth that the Sustainer of all the worlds, all the peoples of the world, and all life-forms is Allah, the Sustainer of the universe. This, in effect, put an end to Pharaoh’s jurisdiction over the Children of Israel.

This realignment of man the subordinate to God the only authority is in essence and in practice the true liberation of man from all temporal power and tyranny. When man no longer feels inferior to the higher classes of society, he no longer owes obedience to a counterfeit government. When man is finally free to be Allah’s, the interests of a particular class are annulled, the customs of a peculiar culture are nullified, and the government of man is replaced by the governance of Allah (ﷻ). Laws that are generated by Allah cannot reconcile with laws that are formulated by man. Allah’s laws are fair, equitable, and just, while man’s laws are biased, unreasonable,



and corrupt. In light of this profound understanding of man's relationship with God the Lawgiver, God the Sovereign, and God the Authority there may be individuals who are striving to honor this potentially acceleratory relationship with Allah, but there cannot be a society called "Islamic" when this society owes its allegiance, its obedience, and its status of rights and duties to a legal system that is not rooted in revelation. No person can live within Allah's *dīn* while simultaneously caged by a man-made legal system. A non-scriptural ruler and a legal system incompatible with scripture renders its citizens and civil servants outside the pale of *īmān* and Islam. For this reason Mūsá (ﷺ) sought the freedom of the Children of Israel — away from the *dīn* of Pharaoh. This is why Mūsá asked Pharaoh to "let my people go,"

**O Pharaoh! Verily, I am a messenger from the Sustainer of all the worlds, so constituted that I cannot say anything about Allah but the truth. I have now come to you with a clear evidence from your Sustainer: so let the Children of Israel go with me! (7:104–105).**

The prelude to all this is Allah's authority and what follows is man's obedience to that authority, and no one else's.

Pharaoh and his elite were not absentminded of the implications of this standoff. They, like the rulers of today, understand a threat to their authority when they hear one, the more so when they hear of Allah's authority to which man has a natural gravitational inclination. This Pharaoh and the men around him sensed the national security threat that Mūsá (ﷺ) and his message had become. This was more than just a coup; this was not some expected change of administration, or a foreign threat. This was, in its essence, a liberation movement that could win over the oppressed people and cause a radical, far-reaching, and permanent change of society, that could delegitimize the rule of Pharaoh and his governors altogether and into the future. What, then, was left for Pharaoh to do? And so he painted Mūsá (ﷺ) as a liar, thereby trying at first to discredit the prophet's character. In effect, Pharaoh

was saying, “Do you mean to tell us you are God’s courier? Come now. What is your tangible proof?”

“Said [Pharaoh], ‘If you have come with a sign [of power], produce it — if you are a man of truth!’” This was an attempt by Pharaoh to damage the reputation of Mūsá (ﷺ), meaning that if he was unable to produce a material demonstration of his power relationship with God, then he could be declared a phoney and a prevaricator, and his pretense would have come crumbling down. But Mūsá was ready for the challenge,

**Thereupon [Mūsá] threw down his staff, and lo! it was a serpent, plainly visible; and he drew forth his hand, and lo! it appeared [shining] white to the beholders (7:107–108).**

This must have stunned Pharaoh. Mūsá’s cane all of a sudden, in front of Pharaoh’s own eyes, was turned into a snake. There was no doubt that something unusual and drastic had just occurred. Then, as if that was not enough, Mūsá’s darkly pigmented hand glowed as he took it out of his pocket — a visibly white and gleaming hand with nothing artificial about it. This glow could not have been attributed to some disease or syndrome. And then when Mūsá put his hand back into his pocket, it returned to its original dark-skinned color. Quite honestly, this was an undisguised miracle. There, in plain daylight, was evidence that Mūsá was a prophet from Allah (ﷻ), the Sustainer of all forms of life and populations.

But did Pharaoh and his elite succumb to the facts? Did they acquiesce to Mūsá’s radical message? Did they accede to the authority of the world’s Sustainer? And if so, what, then, would remain of Pharaoh’s palace, his throne, his crown, and his government? What would become of all the officials, the bureaucracy, and the employees who ran his system and dispensed his orders? What would all this pharaonic pomp and pride, hierarchy and system mean if the new social order has Allah as its only and exclusive authority?

The historically buried fact that is resurrected here in this Book of truth is that if Allah (ﷻ) is the Sustainer of all varieties

of life and of all habitats of life, then He rules. His law is the law of the land. And no other mortal being should be in a position to give orders and to determine standards and laws for the rest of society. If Allah is the ultimate and designated lawgiver then Pharaoh and his power structure become meaningless, because they are not in conformity with God, or in other words, they are in malformation concerning Him. The rule of rules that has been entombed under an official version or an establishmentarian interpretation of history is that once people acknowledge Allah as their deity He becomes their authority. People cannot have a God who has no authority over their lives. If He is their Sustainer, then their job is to listen and obey. But once a pharaoh or any of his equivalents assume the role of authority, then they become the deities of people. Occupying the highest office of earthly power and secular authority in the land is — whether acknowledged or not — as good as constituting a supreme being. This arrangement of affairs (*dīn*) becomes the institution that expresses belief in this particular system. In this relationship between people and ruler, the people belong to their ruler in a legal way that casts aside their attachment to Allah.

One of the basic truths of life is that people in power will not easily give up their hold on power. Concentrated powers and super-powers do not acquiesce to this fact without some form of coercion. They do not and will not relinquish their powers without difficulty. Pharaoh and his pecking order understood the stakes very well. They immediately caught the gist of what Mūsá (ﷺ) was saying. And to deflect from this all-important issue they pursued a diversionary tactic, accusing Mūsá of being an incomparable wizard,

**The elites among Pharaoh's people said, "Verily, this is indeed a brilliant wizard, who wants to drive you out of your land!" [Said Pharaoh], "What, then, do you advise?" (7:109–110).**

At least they were frank enough to skip to the impending consequences of the existential disagreement. The unpublicized difference between Pharaoh and Mūsá (ﷺ) was so significant that it would re-

sult in one of the two sides being geographically dislocated. If this was presented in the terminology of today's political discourse, Mūsá's argument against Pharaoh was nothing less than what Pharaoh would consider an attempted coup; and what Mūsá and his followers would call a revolution.

If people were to free themselves from inherited political concepts or from traditional power influences they would have to concede some very basic facts. First, all this earth belongs to Allah (ﷻ). All peoples on this earth belong to Allah. And once Allah's standards and strictures gain man's confidence, those who are in power will lose their positions and forgo their status. In this return to man's God-given state of nature the powermongers and the megalomaniacs will find they have no line of work and no grandness attending it. With a popular affirmation of Allah's sovereignty and authority the mortal usurpers thereof will become superfluous, not to mention their echelons and power structure.

Pharaoh in communicating with Mūsá (ﷺ) could not have been better acquainted with this fact. From the ancient Egyptian pharaohs to the current American presidents, they all know what it means to bring back God's authority into the people's lives. Even the primitive and nomadic man on the scorching surface of a barren Arabia understood Muhammad's message encapsulated in the affirmation of commitment to Allah (ﷻ): *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (there is no deity/authority except for Allah). In this regard, one of these nomads commented, "This is an affair that is detested by the kings."<sup>357</sup> This affair of course concerns the de-authorization of man and the re-authorization of God. Another Arabian commenting on this radical transformation said to the Prophet (ﷺ), "Then, the Arabians and the non-Arabians are going to do war against you."<sup>358</sup>

From the honest-to-goodness expressions of straightforward people, anyone who listens to this divine message knows that the subject matter is a radical one. And Allah's substance targets those who are guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors — the occupants of the highest offices of power be they Egyptian, Arabian, American, or whoever. Moses (ﷺ) was communicating the divine message at a time when God's words were not being "filtered" or "spun" by gov-

ernments. The ruling class knew instinctively and intellectually that there cannot be two gods in one temple and that there cannot be two or more authorities in one land. The God that belongs in the temple of the land is the same God who belongs in the land of the temple. If there is only One God, then there is only One Authority. In today's world though, the regimes of secularism and the establishments of *kufr* are living on borrowed time because this hidden fact will eventually catch on and people who have been systematically excluded from God's authority and power will assert their God-given nature and declare one day Allah's one and only authority.

This is the subtext of the conversation between Pharaoh and his elite; they were in a quandary about next steps when presented with the demonstration of divine power by Mūsá (ﷺ). This is why they said, **“For sure, he [Moses] is a mastermind wizard who wants to have you leave your land; so what do you counsel?”** This led to a resolution of sorts,

**They [the elite] answered, “Let him and his brother wait awhile, and send to all cities heralds who shall bring before you every sorcerer of profound knowledge” (7:111–112).**

This was a time when Egypt was teeming with these sorts of people. The temples in Egypt abounded with individuals who had these types of skills. It appears that the temples and its custodians were the centers of any art that invoked supernatural powers. In establishmentarian religions, religions of paganism, and non-scriptural creeds, there seems to be a relationship between religious doctrine and magic.

At this point, the decision at the highest level of the Egyptian government was to give Mūsá (ﷺ) a respite; and in the meantime there would be a “national” effort to pool together all the talents and skills that could undo the officially fabricated sorcery of Mūsá. And then, when Mūsá would face off against the most skillful sorcerers in the land, the issue would finally be settled. One thing of note that can be said about Pharaoh is, at least, he tried to put

Mūsá to a public test; this is quite unlike the pharaohs of today who have no second thoughts about waging wars against scripture-bearers and scripture-communicators.

Representing that scene in today's words, it can be said that the Egyptian superpower of that time pooled together as a matter of national security its best and its brightest in this art. These were paranormal professionals as well as religious figures, whose combined effort would merit a great reward from their government,

**And the sorcerers came to Pharaoh [and] said, “Verily, we ought to have a great reward if it is we who prevail.” Answered [Pharaoh], “Yes, and verily, you shall be among those who are privy to my inner circle” (7:113–114).**

Such religious and “miracle” professionals are known to be at the beck and call of their governments and regimes. It is this class of religious mercenaries who give legitimacy to anti-scriptural governments any time these governments are threatened by the truth and the bearers of that truth. This has been a permanent feature of those who leverage their “religious” knowledge to defend anti-Godly regimes. These “religious” functionaries serve to win over popular support for the tyrants, who in turn, pay them handsomely for their services. For all practical purposes, tyrannies gain legitimacy in the name of religion largely because such religious types are the ones who normalize “the divine right of kings.”

Pharaoh not only gave them his word that they would be compensated generously, but as an added incentive, that they would enter into his inner circle and be on retainer for future services. Unfortunately for Pharaoh and his sorcerers, they were too deluded by their own power to realize that this was not a matter of the paranormal, the extrasensory, or the magical. This was going to become a showdown between them who represented hocus-pocus and Moses (ﷺ) who represented the unmistakable power of Allah (ﷻ) — the power that cannot be wielded through the influence of sorcerers or tyrants.

In the lead-up to this state-organized spectacle, these sorcerers appeared very self-assured about their upcoming performance and comfortable with the expected remuneration. To them, the extra bonus of becoming the trusted associates of Pharaoh was “a dream come true,” as with all whose sense of personal validation comes out of the approval of kings. When the moment finally arrived, they defiantly addressed Mūsá (ﷺ), challenging him to throw down his staff. However, what was about to happen, even though the immediate moment did not divulge it, was going to be to their benefit. The reward they were about to receive would dwarf all of what they had contemplated could come from Pharaoh,

**They said, “O Moses! Either you shall throw [your cane first], or we shall [be the first to] throw.” He answered, “You throw [first]” (7:115–116).**

In contrast to their own self-appraisal of their skills, repute, and celebrity, Mūsá (ﷺ) did not seem to care about their status, prestige, and numbers. He said, **“You throw [first],”** demonstrating how convinced and poised he was in what would ultimately win the day.

As these sorcerers had the ability to strike anxiety and trepidation into the hearts of the viewers, Mūsá (ﷺ) himself may have been surprised to see what they were capable of,

**And when they threw down [their staffs], they cast a spell upon the people’s eyes, and struck them with awe, and produced mighty sorcery (7:116).**

When Allah (ﷻ), in the words of this Qur’an, says that they **“...produced mighty sorcery”** it must have been a sight to behold. This *crème de la crème* of the sorcerers had the capacity to manipulate the visual sensation of the viewers — **“saḥarū a’yuna al-nās: they performed magic on the eyes of the people”** — causing their hearts to beat with alarm and tension, amazement and shock. This sorcery of theirs not only took the hearts of the

audience into a state of agitation and suspense, it also had its moving effect upon Mūsá (ﷺ) himself, as he is known to have felt fear on the occasion,

Said [the sorcerers], “O Moses! Either you throw [your staff first], or we shall be the first to throw.” He answered, “No, you throw [first].” And lo! by virtue of their sorcery, their [magic] ropes and staffs appeared to him to be moving rapidly: and in his heart Moses became apprehensive. [But] We said, “Fear not! Verily, you are higher [in rank] than they are [in this stand-off]!” (20:65–68).

However, Pharaoh and his elites, not to mention the bedazzled spectators, were in for a surprise — a surprise that would not be misconstrued by the sorcerers,

And [then] We inspired Moses, “Throw down your staff!” — and lo! it swallowed up all their deceptions: whereupon the truth was established, and vain was proved all that they had been doing. And thus were they vanquished there and then, and became utterly humiliated (7:117–119).

This demonstrates how the *bāṭil* dazzles and entrances public opinion for a brief time, when people begin to think it has won the day, and will keep winning forever. But this *bāṭil* cannot hold its own when the *ḥaqq* unfolds; all of its previous shock and awe dissipates like a bursted bubble and its flare-up suddenly flares down. The *ḥaqq* emerges as the champion with a depth of confidence and a range of motion that convincingly strikes down all false statements, false beliefs, and false presentations, “The truth took its course... And thus was invalidated all that they [the sorcerers] were doing.”

With their hubris deflated, these sorcerers, who had come in with the reputation of being the best of the best, had gone in the



span of one brief moment from the heights of overbearing pride to the depths of utter disgrace, **“And thus were they vanquished there and then, and became altogether humiliated.”**

All this notwithstanding, it was one thing to humiliate Pharaoh’s minions, but to humiliate the king of kings himself was yet another thing in and of itself,

**And down fell the sorcerers prostrating themselves [and] exclaiming, “We have come to commit [ourselves] to the Sustainer of all the worlds, the Sustainer of Moses and Aaron!” (7:120–122).**

The sorcerers commissioned by Pharaoh were the final word on the paranormal, magic, and the black arts. They knew it when they saw it. But, on seeing what Mūsá (ﷺ) did they knew immediately that he was not a magician, a sorcerer, or an illusionist. What Mūsá (ﷺ) did and what they saw was no trick or sleight of hand — it was the real thing. They acknowledged that they could never do what they saw Moses do. And so, being honest to themselves and their profession, they immediately expressed their fealty to Moses.

Here, though, Pharaoh and his tyrannical class of people found it impossible to understand how this could happen, how these spiritualists and performers could turn around in a matter of moments to join Moses (ﷺ). Tyrants think they have conditioned and controlled people for so long that these people will never be able to break loose from their control and command. They cannot understand that people’s hearts are between the hands of the Most Gracious, and should He will it, the same people who were His enemies yesterday will be His adherents tomorrow. Pharaoh was aghast at this turn of events. How could the very sorcerers whom he himself had screened subsume themselves to the Sustainer of the universe, the Sustainer of Moses and Aaron, when just a few minutes ago they were unanimous in their effort to cancel Moses and all his claptrap about a Sustainer of all the worlds? Pharaoh, the typical tyrant that he was and that he represents today, would not give in as he toiled on to preserve his power structure and absolute control,

Said Pharaoh, “Have you come to believe in him before I have given you permission? Behold, this is indeed a plot you have cunningly devised in this [my] city in order to drive out its people hence! But in time you shall come to know [my revenge]: most certainly shall I cut off your hands and your feet in great numbers, because of [your] perverseness, and then I shall most certainly crucify you in great numbers, all together!” (7:123–124).

This is how people with absolute power speak and behave. They think they have power over not only what people do but what they think about right and wrong, and about commitment. And in this vein, when Pharaoh said, “**You [sorcerers] commit yourselves to Moses before I grant you permission to do so,**” he felt he had the power over someone’s heart to respond to the truth once recognized. As in other instances, Pharaoh and those like him have it all wrong. When the truth jumps out at you, as it did here, there is no time to ask or plead; you yield to the will, authority, and power of Allah (ﷻ) without equivocation. No one can suppress the attachment to Allah when it comes on, even someone as seemingly powerful as Pharaoh.

Pharaoh was not about to let go without a struggle replete with threats of pain and torture. Pharaoh, so full of his own ego, was blinded to the truth even as it was pounding on his senses. Pharaoh, like all dictators and power maniacs, was attached to his throne, glued to his crown, and cemented to his mansion. He did not want to part with all these perks of power. This was the psychology that incriminated the sorcerers who had turned to Mūsá (ﷺ), “**Behold, this is indeed a plot you have cunningly devised in this [my] city in order to drive out its people hence!**” In another rendition of the same conversation in *Ṣūrah ṬāHa*, Pharaoh says, “**Verily, he [Moses] must be your master who has taught you magic!**” (20:71).

By now the issue had reached the point of no return. Mūsá (ﷺ) wanted a society and a system that acknowledges Allah as the Sustainer and Lord of all habitats, environments, and populated

areas. This attribution of authority to Allah (ﷻ) is what scares autocrats and democrats. God's just rule means the end of their oppressive rules. They know they can only continue to rule so long as God is excluded from the public domain. They absent God and present themselves as the legitimate authorities and the legitimate rulers over their societies. People become their flock instead of God's flock. This fact is so clear to the tyrants but so unclear to the masses. Mūsá came to clarify it, and Pharaoh and his elite undoubtedly understood what Mūsá was trying to achieve. But when their handpicked sorcerers went over to Mūsá, they were more scared than ever before. Because of the fear of losing his entire corrupt setup, Pharaoh proclaimed his dire and ruthless threat,

**But in time you shall come to know [my revenge]: most certainly shall I cut off your hands and your feet in great numbers, because of [your] perverseness, and then I shall most certainly crucify you in great numbers, all together!" (7:123–124).**

These are the words of jeopardized dictators whose inner self is being revealed as they threaten those they consider to be enemies. The vocabulary of insecure autocrats is peppered with ominous intimidations of the kind everyone has heard: "We will persecute our adversaries," "we will liquidate our enemies," "we will finish off our opposition," or "we will 'take out' those hostile forces," etc. It was not enough for Pharaoh to openly defy Mūsá (ﷻ); correspondingly, he had to brutally penalize the sorcerers for their new conviction and associated behavior. He threatened to mistreat, maim, and mutilate them for their treachery. Despots and dictatorial powers usually have no rationale or public appeal to make their case; this is why they turn to abuse, affliction, and anguish. The validation of how empty such emperors really are comes from their resorting to force when their capacity to reason things through falls short in the presence of those who are demanding justice. When their propaganda tools are no longer doing the job, they revert to whacking, lashing, and murdering.

The human mind and heart, once attached to Allah (ﷻ), will not cave in to declarations of an intention to inflict harm. Once individuals and societies are joined with Allah, they rise above a tyrant's bluster. These are the moments in life when principle defeats fear and when truth trumps tyranny. There is no cost-benefit-analysis psychology in this standoff. Those who are committed to Allah stand on principle. If a moment in life presents itself where a person has to prove his strong commitment by adhering to the truth in the face of death or torture then the core truth will say its word and emerge yet stronger, even as the painful waning moments are but a minor detail of a life that has come to affirm the Creator's authority and power.

**They answered, “Verily, unto our Sustainer do we turn — for you take vengeance on us only because we have come to believe in and commit to our Sustainer’s messages [of power] as soon as they came to us. Our Sustainer! Pour down on us patience in adversity, and have us expire in a state of surrender unto You!” (7:125–126).**

This demonstrates the efficacy of a commitment to Allah (ﷻ). The commitment relationship by these men to Allah would not permit them to bow down to Pharaoh again. They were ready for a new way, a journey to Allah with all the composure and consolation attending it, **“They said, ‘Certainly, we are reverting to our Sustainer.’”**

This is the difference between a nation of people who will do anything and everything to please the status quo sultan and the community of committed Muslims who live and die for their principles. If committed Muslims were to look for short cuts, compromise their principles as circumstances would dictate, or live in dual-personalities, then who would become Allah's word and the Prophet's model “in the flesh”?

To be sure, the day-to-day impasse between Pharaoh and his likes on one side and Mūsá (ﷺ) and his likes on the other side ul-

timately ends up with the instruments of state and government power coming down hard upon the few and the faithful. However, those who are “coupled” with Allah (ﷻ), meaning they are always in His company, will not beg the goliath government and the titan tyrant for amnesty or mercy. Rather these committed and courageous companions of the Almighty turn to Him and ask Him for fortitude and discipline within such trying times of opposition to the imperial pharaoh. What is more important than anything else is to remain loyal and faithful until the final moment in life, **“Our Sustainer! Shower down on us patience and have us die in a state of surrender to You.”**

No material power on earth has ever been able to face down the consolidated human expression of commitment to Allah (ﷻ). This is the culmination of faith. Tyrants in their moment of power intoxication think they can control people’s hearts like they control their bodies. These power-inebriated imperialists think their rules and laws, which they have applied for so long to the bodies of their populations, also hold sway over their spirits; but they miscalculate, especially when they have to start dealing with people who belong less to them than to Allah. In fact, when people’s hearts long for Allah (ﷻ), incline toward Him, and expect a return to Him, these others are all but powerless.

This was one of the most telling turning points in human history. Pharaoh and his regime were on one side and Mūsá (ﷺ) and the new religious professional class of Egyptians who saw the light were on the other side. This was a turnabout of strategic import in the history of man on earth. In this standoff, principle outflanked the allurements of life, man’s willpower overcame his body’s pain, and man defeated Satan.

Principle triumphing over power is the true meaning of freedom, not the phoney secular guarantees of freedoms that amount to so much ink on paper. Where is the freedom in today’s world to speak to the pharaoh in the White House the same way Moses (ﷺ) spoke to his counterpart? The defenders and promoters of the Euro-American West flaunt their so-called *freedom of assembly*. They say that the people have a right to congregate for the discussion of

public questions and to organize into political parties or pressure groups for the purpose of influencing public policy (the right of assembly does not authorize meetings designed to accomplish an illegal purpose or those that lead to a breach of the peace or resistance to lawful authority). They say that freedom of assembly is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the US Constitution and state constitutions in the United States. In addition, the US Supreme Court has ruled that the due process clause of the 14th Amendment protects the individual's freedom of assembly against infringement by state governments.<sup>359</sup>

The 21st-century version of Pharaoh's Egypt indicates that in a democratic society, the people must have the right to meet freely in peaceable assemblage to consider public questions. This right is closely related to freedoms of speech and of petition. All act as a restraint upon legislators and other public officials. Civil rights protest movements and mass demonstrations for peace, disarmament, and environmental safety have put the right of assembly to severe tests because of the potentials for violence and civil disobedience.<sup>360</sup>

The other song in this noisy orchestra of verbally assured freedoms in the Euro-American West is *freedom of association*. And that they say is the right to organize for political, religious, or other social purposes. The US Constitution makes no mention of freedom of association, but it is implicit in guarantees of freedom of speech, assembly, and religion.<sup>361</sup>

The American people are noted for being organization-minded; many Americans belong to several organizations. The right of association has received much attention because of laws passed to curtail the activities and rights of alleged subversive organizations and their members, and various efforts to impede the activities of civil rights groups promoting desegregation. Such laws have been attacked in some quarters as imputing guilt by association, since members of a group may not necessarily subscribe to all its beliefs or actions. Persons do not, however, have the right to organize in order to accomplish "illegal" aims. The courts have not, however, permitted any limitations to be placed upon lawful groups. The right to associate is recognized as essential in a demo-

cratic society since generally an individual can accomplish more with a group than by acting alone. In the social and economic arenas, the US Supreme Court has held that when women are denied access to the business contacts and civic activities that characterize membership in male-only private clubs, states and cities may ban sex discrimination by such clubs without violating the right of association of men.<sup>362</sup>

The Euro-American West loudly trumpets its *freedom of the press*, which they say is the right to publish and disseminate information without prior restraint, subject to penalties for abuse of the right. Abuses include libel, obscenity, incitement to crime, contempt of court, or sedition. Freedom of the press is protected by the First and 14th Amendments to the US Constitution and by all state constitutions. Major contemporary problems have involved censorship of books and movies for alleged obscenity, restraints on communist publications, governmental secrecy, and the difficulty of safeguarding both freedom of the press and a fair trial.<sup>363</sup>

Chapter and verse on the issue says that a free press is essential to a free society, particularly as it relates to the dissemination of political information. The US Supreme Court has narrowly restricted any efforts at political censorship and has permitted wide latitude to criticize public officials. In dealing with obscenity, the courts have had difficulty in developing a formula to identify this abuse. The conflict between a free press and a fair trial involves a clash between two essential rights. The problem arises from the difficulty of holding a trial free from bias when press, radio, and television publicize details of the crime and the trial. In 1980, the US Congress enacted legislation (to reverse the Supreme Court's decision in *Zurcher v. Stanfor Daily*, 1978) to prohibit unannounced searches of newsrooms or other organizations engaged in First Amendment activities.<sup>364</sup>

In this supermarket of Western freedoms, there is the now ubiquitous *freedom of speech*, which is the right to speak without prior restraint, subject to penalties for abuse of the right. Abuses include slander, obscenity, incitement to crime, contempt of court, or sedition. By virtue of the First and 14th Amendments to the US

Constitution and state bills of rights, neither the national government nor the states may abridge the right of freedom of speech.<sup>365</sup>

In this well orchestrated symphony of freedoms, freedom of speech is impossible without the right to disseminate ideas. Generally, the courts have treated the guarantee liberally. With regard to the advocacy of communist doctrine, the courts have distinguished between mere advocacy of abstract doctrine and conspiratorial advocacy. Antiwar protests and the civil rights movement have also tested American tolerance for dissent. For the most part, the courts have protected the peaceful expression of unpopular ideas, including the right to “symbolic speech” such as picketing or the wearing of protest insignia. Freedom of expression has also been extended to commercial advertising and to the arts. In placing limitations on freedom of speech, the courts have attempted to apply such concepts as “clear and present danger” to determine whether a given situation justifies restriction.<sup>366</sup>

Pharaoh, once proven to the public as nothing more than an ordinary human being who cannot measure up to the power and authority of the Sustainer of all the worlds, regressed into the threats that are recorded in the above *āyāt*. The same warmongering sentiments apply to the Egypt of the 21st century and to the resident pharaoh in the White House. In an editorial published three days after the 9/11 false-flag attacks, the *Washington Post* newspaper, an echo chamber of the sitting pharaoh’s “inside the beltway” elite, called for the suppression of democratic and civil rights, and the permanent transformation of US domestic and foreign policy,

[I]f replying to that attack is truly to become an organizing principle of US policy, as we believe it should — if the United States is to undertake the difficult and sustained campaign against those who threaten it — then neither politics nor diplomacy can return to where they were... This is most of all true as Congress and others discuss the possible need to sacrifice privacy, freedom of movement, or other liberties to the needs of domestic security.<sup>367</sup>



Summarizing the wide array of repressive measures being pushed through the US government to silence domestic dissent, international human rights lawyer Michael Ratner — a US constitutional expert and Skelly Wright Fellow at Yale Law School — records that,

... rights that we thought embedded in the Constitution and protected by international law are in serious jeopardy or have already been eliminated...

It is no exaggeration to say we are moving toward a police state. In this atmosphere, we should take nothing for granted. We will not be protected, nor will the courts, the Congress, or the many liberals who are gleefully jumping on the bandwagon of repression guarantee our rights... The domestic consequences of the war on terrorism include massive arrests and interrogation of immigrants, the possible use of torture to obtain information, the creation of a special new cabinet office of Homeland Security, and the passage of legislation granting intelligence and law enforcement agencies much broader powers to intrude into the private lives of Americans. Recent new initiatives — the wiretapping of attorney-client conversations and military commissions to try suspected terrorists — undermine core constitutional protections and are reminiscent of inquisitorial practices... the war on terrorism also means pervasive government and media censorship of information, the silencing of dissent, and widespread ethnic and religious profiling of Muslims, Arabs, and Asian people. It means creating a climate of fear where one suspects one's neighbors and people are afraid to speak out.<sup>368</sup>

“Since September 11th, we have seen one blow against the Constitution after another,” notes Francis A. Boyle, Professor of International Law at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Law. He adds,

What we've seen, since September 11, if you add up every thing that Ashcroft, Bush and their coterie of federalist society lawyers have done here, is a coup d'état against the United States Constitution... Recently, we've had Ashcroft saying that he had, unilaterally, instituted monitoring of attorney-client communications without even informing anyone — he just went ahead and did it, despite the Fourth Amendment [to the US Constitution] ban on unreasonable searches and seizures without warrant and the Sixth Amendment right to representation by counsel.<sup>369</sup>

About 1,200 people were detained under the criminal investigations into the attacks. Yet the US Department of Justice completely failed to build a case against a single prime US suspect. By November 15th, 2001, US federal authorities had to admit that they had not found any evidence that any of the over 1,200 people facing indefinite detention had any sort of role in the 9/11 attacks. Indeed, numerous legally binding constitutional and international treaties have been sidestepped or worse, completely violated. Professor Boyle went on to say,

We are becoming a banana republic here in the United States, with “disappeared” people, which was the phenomenon that we all saw down in Latin American dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s, with the support, by the way, of the United States Government...

We don't know where they are or the conditions under which they are being held. We have no idea whether they have access to attorneys. We do know one of them died, under highly suspicious circumstances, while in custody. There have been reports that he was tortured to death... Clearly aliens here are entitled to the protections of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment, as well as to the Article III (Section 2, Clause 3) basic constitutional rights in criminal cases, including in-

dictment, trial before a federal district judge or jury, [rights relating to] venue and things of that nature.<sup>370</sup>

Robert B. Reich, secretary of labor under the Clinton administration, further commented,

I'm surprised there hasn't been more of an outcry. The president is, by emergency decree, getting rid of rights that we assumed that anyone within our borders legally would have. We can find ourselves in a police state step-by-step without realizing that we have made these compromises along the way.<sup>371</sup>

Meanwhile, the US Justice Department planned to “round up” and interrogate some 5,000 men primarily of Middle Eastern background who entered the US legally in the few years after 9/11. The Department of Justice, alongside the FBI, also considered the use of torture as an approved US policy against detainees who exert their right to remain silent. The *Washington Post* reported that the US government was seriously considering the use of “pressure tactics, such as those employed occasionally by Israeli interrogators, to extract information” from persons in their custody.<sup>372</sup>

A 1998 report by the Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, found that Israeli interrogators “routinely use torture” against Palestinians. Illegal practices included in this are isolation, sleep deprivation, psychological torment and direct physical force including beatings, kickings, violent shaking, painful shackling, and use of objects designed or used to inflict extreme pain. Such interrogations usually span months. Human rights groups confirm that Israeli torture against detained Palestinians is often so severe as to result in death during custody.<sup>373</sup>

Professor Boyle observes, “When will the FBI, and the CIA, and the National Security Agency start to turn these powers, which they have under the Ashcroft police state bill, against American citizens? Clearly, that will be the next step.”<sup>374</sup> Indeed, the extent to which the public has been goaded into accepting massive sup-

pression of civil rights was particularly illustrated when US Attorney General John Ashcroft announced that critics of the Bush administration's measures were fear-mongers "who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty [and] aid terrorists." Apparently, John Ashcroft believes that people who adhere to the wisdom of the US founding father Benjamin Franklin — that liberty must not be sacrificed for the sake of security — are supporters of terrorism.<sup>375</sup>

Boyle's concerns are corroborated by the Bush administration's actions. The USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, USAPA), signed by President George W. Bush about six weeks after the 9/11 attacks, has

...given sweeping new powers to both domestic law enforcement and international intelligence agencies and have eliminated the checks and balances that previously gave courts the opportunity to ensure that these powers were not abused... Most of these checks and balances were put into place after previous misuse of surveillance powers by these agencies, including the revelation in 1974 that the FBI and foreign intelligence agencies had spied on over 10,000 citizens, including Martin Luther King,

as noted by the San Francisco-based electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), an organization that defends civil liberties in the realm of new technologies.<sup>376</sup>

The USA PATRIOT Act has paved the way for the abuse of civil liberties at the whims of US agencies. Among the measures imposed by the USAPA are the following,

...The government may now monitor the online activities of innocent Americans, and perhaps even track what websites you read, by merely telling a judge anywhere in the US that the spying could lead to information that is "relevant" to an ongoing criminal investigation. The

person spied on does not have to be the target of the investigation. This application must be granted and the government is not obligated to report to the court or tell the person spied upon what it has done.

...[The] FBI and CIA can now go from phone to phone, computer to computer without demonstrating that each is being used by a suspect or target of an order, or even specifically identifying the person targeted. The government may now serve a single Title III wiretap, FISA wiretap or pen/trap order on any person or entity nationwide, regardless of whether that person or entity is named in the order. The government need not make any showing to a court that the particular information or communication to be acquired is relevant to a criminal investigation. In the pen/trap or FISA situations, they do not even have to report where they served the order or what information they received. The EFF believes that the opportunities for abuse of these broad new powers are immense...

Just as the domestic law enforcement surveillance powers have expanded, the corollary powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act [FISA] have also greatly expanded, including general expansion of FISA authority. FISA authority to spy on Americans or foreign persons in the US (and those who communicate with them) increased from situations where the suspicion that the person is the agent of a foreign government is “the” purpose of the surveillance to anytime that this is “‘a significant purpose’ of the surveillance.”<sup>377</sup>

In a detailed point-by-point rebuttal, US Representative Dennis Kucinich harshly criticized the USA PATRIOT Act as a direct contravention of the US Constitution. Before questioning the Act’s constitutional implications, he asserted,

[W]e must challenge the rationale of the PATRIOT Act. We must ask: why should America put aside guarantees

of constitutional justice? How can we justify in effect canceling the First Amendment and the right of free speech, the right to peaceably assemble? How can we justify in effect canceling the Fourth Amendment, probable cause, the prohibitions against unreasonable search and seizure? How can we justify in effect canceling the Fifth Amendment, nullifying due process, and allowing for indefinite incarceration without trial? How can we justify in effect canceling the Sixth Amendment, the right to prompt and public trial? How can we justify in effect canceling the Eighth Amendment which protects against cruel and unusual punishment?

We cannot justify widespread wiretaps and internet surveillance without judicial supervision, let alone with it. We cannot justify secret searches without a warrant. We cannot justify giving the attorney general the ability to designate domestic terror groups. We cannot justify giving the FBI total access to any type of data that may exist in any system anywhere such as medical records and financial records.

We cannot justify giving the CIA the ability to target people in this country for intelligence surveillance. We cannot justify a government that takes from the people our right to privacy and then assumes for its own operations a right to total secrecy.<sup>378</sup>

It also seems that measures designed to expand the powers of the government over the American people are being pursued in tandem with attempts to decrease public understanding of the uses to which government power is put. At the beginning of November 2001, two members of the US House of Representatives' Committee on Government Reform wrote to President George W. Bush expressing their dismay at the President's sudden change to the executive order governing the release of presidential records. Bush's new executive order "contains provisions that could drastically restrict public access to important records." It even went so far as to allow

“the sitting President to withhold the records of a former President, even if that President wants those records released.” It further “requires the public to show a specific need for a document before it is released.” The letter from the Congressional Committee on Government Reform goes on to note,

These provisions clearly violate the intent of law. The Presidential Records Act was passed by Congress to assure full public access to Presidential records after a reasonable interval of time. The goal of the law is the orderly and systematic release of records — not the indefinite suppression of these historical documents. We are particularly concerned that the Executive Order tries to rewrite the Act by withholding records that are part of the deliberative process... The Executive Order violates the intent of Congress and keeps the public in the dark.<sup>379</sup>

In the secular mind or in the public un-briefed mind on intelligence matters, why such extraordinary, anti-democratic steps were introduced at this time in a country claiming to be engaged in the defense of democracy and freedom on behalf of civilization, is hard to imagine, unless one knows his history and therefore knows how ancient and modern pharaohs act. Pharaoh yesterday and the president today have their own notions about violating the intent of law, indefinitely suppressing presidential records, bypassing the intent of congress or parliament, and generally keeping the public in the dark.

Indeed, discussing the implications of President Bush’s new executive order, the *Guardian* specified,

The US president, George [W.] Bush, last night signed an executive order that allows either a past or sitting president to block access to White House papers, a move that has angered historians, journalists and former president Bill Clinton... Under the terms of Mr. Bush’s order, any sitting or former president could veto the release of pres-

idential papers... [T]he order would also mean that Mr. Bush's personal papers detailing the decision-making process in the current war on terrorism could remain secret in perpetuity.<sup>380</sup>

The Bush administration's increasing opposition to public oversight over the policies of governmental and intelligence agencies was manifest in its response to a US Congressional subpoena exploring abuses in the Boston FBI office around mid-December, 2001. President George W. Bush blocked the inquiry, of course bringing up the pertinent question as to what the FBI had to hide. The *Boston Globe* reported,

President Bush yesterday [12-16-2001] invoked executive privilege to block a Congressional subpoena exploring abuses in the Boston FBI office, prompting the chairman of a House committee to lambaste his fellow Republicans and triggering what one congressman said is the start of "a constitutional confrontation."

"You tell the President there's going to be war between the President and this committee," Dan Burton, the Indiana Republican who heads the House Government Reform Committee, told a Justice Department official during what was supposed to be a routine pre-hearing handshake. "His dad was at a 90 percent approval rating and he lost, and the same thing can happen to him," Burton added, jabbing his finger and glaring at Carl Thorsen, a deputy assistant attorney general who was attempting to introduce a superior who was testifying. "We've got a dictatorial president and a Justice Department that does not want Congress involved... Your guy's acting like he's king." The searing tone continued for more than four hours from Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives. All objected to the order Bush signed Wednesday and made public yesterday. It claimed executive privilege in refusing to hand over



prosecutors' memos in criminal cases, including an investigation of campaign-finance abuses, saying doing so "would be contrary to the national interest."

Committee members said the order's sweeping language created a shift in presidential policy and practices dating back to the Harding administration. They complained also that it followed a pattern in which the Bush administration has limited access to presidential historical records, refused to give Congress documents about the vice president's energy task force, and unilaterally announced plans for military commissions that would try suspected terrorists in secret. Representative William D. Delahunt, a Quincy, MA[ssachusetts] Democrat and former district attorney, said, "This is the beginning of a constitutional confrontation. In a short period of time, this Department of Justice has manifested tendencies that were of concern to Senate members during the confirmation hearings for John Ashcroft as attorney general."<sup>381</sup>

Indeed, measures spearheaded by US Attorney General John Ashcroft are now in place designed to block access to public records available under the US Freedom of Information Act (FOIA, 1974). The *San Francisco Chronicle* described the Act as "one of our greatest democratic reforms," allowing

...ordinary citizens to hold the government accountable by requesting and scrutinizing public documents and records. Without it, journalists, newspapers, historians and watchdog groups would never be able to keep the government honest. [It allows the public] to know what our elected officials do, rather than what they say... Yet without fanfare, the attorney general simply quashed the FOIA... rather than asking federal officials to pay special attention when the public's right to know might collide with the government's need to safeguard our security, Ashcroft instead asked them to consider whether "insti-

tutional, commercial and personal privacy interests” could be implicated by disclosure of the information.<sup>382</sup>

Even more disturbing, the *Chronicle* reported the Justice Department’s new policy of blocking FOIA requests, citing the department’s official notice to that effect and explaining its implications,

[Department of Justice official notice]: “When you carefully consider FOIA requests and decide to withhold records, in whole or in part, you can be assured that the Department of Justice will defend your decision unless they lack a sound legal basis or present an unwarranted risk of adverse impact on the ability of other agencies to protect other important records.”

...When coupled with President Bush’s Nov. 1 executive order that allows him to seal all presidential records since 1980, the effect is positively chilling... [H]alf the country is also worried that the government might use the fear of terrorism as a pretext for protecting officials from public scrutiny.

Now we know that they have good reason to worry. For more than a quarter of a century, the Freedom of Information Act has ratified the public’s right to know what the government, its agencies, and its officials have done. It has substituted transparency for secrecy and we, as a democracy, have benefitted from the truths that have been extracted from public records... [A] sample of the revelations made possible by recent FOIA requests [shows that]... none of them endanger the national security. It is important to remember that all classified documents are protected from FOIA requests and unavailable to the public.

Yet these secrets have exposed all kinds of official skullduggery, some of which even violated the law. True, such revelations may disgrace public officials or even result in criminal charges, but that is the consequence —

or shall we say, the punishment — for violating the public trust.

No one disputes that we must safeguard our national security [even at the expense of civil liberty]. All of us want to protect our nation from further acts of terrorism. But we must never allow the public's right to know, enshrined in the Freedom of Information Act, to be suppressed for the sake of official convenience.<sup>383</sup>

Professor Walden Bello has described the resultant situation quite well,

The war against terror knows no borders, so the war at home must be pursued with equal vigor. September 11 was Pearl Harbor II and the Bush administration tells Americans that they are now in the midst of total war like World War II. Not even the Cold War was presented in such totalistic terms as the War against Terror...

Laws and executive orders restricting the rights to privacy and free movement have been passed with a speed and in a manner that would have turned Joe McCarthy green with envy. The United States is only nine weeks into this war, observes David Corn in *The Nation*, but already legislation has been passed and executive orders signed that establish secret military tribunals to try non-US citizens; impose guilt by association on immigrants; authorize the attorney general to indefinitely lock up aliens on mere suspicion; expand the use of wiretaps and secret searches; allow the use of secret evidence in immigration proceedings that aliens cannot confront or rebut; destroy the secrecy of the client-lawyer relationship by allowing the government to listen in; and institutionalize racial and ethnic profiling.<sup>384</sup>

The 9/11 attacks thus provided exactly the sort of “truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat” to “fashion a con-

sensus on foreign policy issues” at home — as envisaged by Zbigniew Brzezinski — that would be essential to justify an open-ended “war on terror” designed more specifically to firmly establish American control over Eurasia, thus consolidating US global hegemony, with Afghanistan constituting the necessary stepping stone. The ruthlessly jingoistic mood whipped up in the aftermath of 9/11, lending the US a new-found freedom to restructure the world order as it wishes, without obstruction or dissent, was captured in *Time* magazine,

America is no mere international citizen. It is the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome. Accordingly, America is in a position to reshape norms — how? By unapologetic and implacable demonstrations of will.<sup>385</sup>

This issued from the following background of “rage and retribution,” as detailed in an 11th September *Time* editorial by Lance Morrow,

For once, let’s have no fatuous rhetoric about “healing.” Healing is inappropriate now, and dangerous. There will be time later for the tears of sorrow. A day cannot live in infamy without the nourishment of rage. Let’s have rage. What’s needed is a unified, unifying Pearl Harbor sort of purple American fury — a ruthless indignation that doesn’t leak away in a week or two... Let America explore the rich reciprocal possibilities of the fatwa. A policy of focused brutality does not come easily to a self-conscious, self-indulgent, contradictory, diverse humane nation... American needs to relearn... why human nature has equipped us all with a weapon... called hatred.<sup>386</sup>

Three months later, the imperialistic, indeed, almost fascist undertone of these sentiments was disclosed by William Pfaff in an article for the *International Herald Tribune*. Pfaff observed,

The world begins 2002 in a situation without precedent in human history. A single nation, the United States, enjoys unrivaled military and economic power, and can impose itself virtually anywhere it wants...

Even without nuclear weapons, the United States could destroy the military forces of any other nation on earth. If it should so choose, it could impose complete social and economic breakdown on almost any other state... It seems to many Americans and others that the United States is already potentially head of a modern version of universal empire... The West always took for granted that it provided the universal norm, and that the rest of the world would eventually have to conform to Western standards and beliefs. Its conviction of superiority began in religion... In recent years, even the Americanization of global popular culture has seemed to many to presage a coming Americanization of global political and economic values. Americans themselves have always believed that American society represents what is best and most advanced...

The fundamental issue of the next two to three decades will inevitably be how the United States employs the amazing power it now exercises. Before September 11, the country was already close to a universality of influence and even domination of international society that no previous empire ever possessed. It lacked the political will to impose itself. September 11 supplied that will. Intrinsic to the quality of an empire is whether it is imposed culturally, as well as militarily and economically. If it is to succeed, acquiescence, if not conversion, is required on the part of the elites who are potential citizens of the empire.<sup>387</sup>

Recalling the 9/11 attacks befits the discussion here because the impact of that event on the public as channeled through the media and the government is equivalent to the impact of a whole

class of professionals around Pharaoh changing sides — from Pharaoh to Mūsá (ﷺ). This was Pharaoh's Pearl Harbor. It was Pharaoh's 9/11. Hence, he had to use all the public imagery available at the time to whip up a national hysteria against Moses and the Children of Israel. And so it was with Pharaoh as it is with today's American dictators and European despots: freedoms are nice platitudes but they are expendable lest people discover life's true Authority, man's true Sovereign, and society's true Sustainer. The only difference between the catalytic event in ancient Egypt and 9/11 (or Pearl Harbor) is that in the case of the pharaoh in Washington, his elites may have induced the event by which they tried to abort the potential of a grand discovery of Islam and a mass recognition of God as humanity's salvation. But the law of unintended consequences caused both the iconic Pharaoh of times past and his contemporary likeness to come to terms with the fact that it is Allah (ﷻ) who manages how things unfold and not them.

In establishing a parallel between the “national security threat” during Pharaoh's reign and that during the current reign of his counterpart in Washington, note that Pharaoh clearly realized the national security of his regime was threatened when a professional class he endorsed converted en masse to the side of Mūsá. The Sustainer of Moses and Aaron (ﷻ) was no longer a theoretical God up in heaven; He was now a popular rallying point who had the potential of overthrowing Pharaoh's regime in the near future. Today, this is also the case with the ever expanding Islamic movement that received a much needed shot in the arm from the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Before anyone else, the pharaoh in the White House and his elites in the deep state composed of intelligence operatives, media functionaries, corporate titans, think-tank policy wonks, and military generals realized that the greatest existential threat to their existence and the simultaneous lifting of the “iron curtain” they have imposed on the masses comes not from communism, Marxism, a free-market China, or anyone else, but from the consolidation of the committed Muslims around Allah's authority and His final Prophet's mission to leave a just world for man. It has been said before and it bears repeating: authoritarian rulers know

they cannot continue with their secular laws when people discover their heavenly God — a God of justice on earth and good will toward men. When people discover and affirm this God of justice, the authoritarians of self-rule, self-interest, and self-centeredness will crash in humiliation.

The other important observation herein concerns the professional class of people around Pharaoh, who, once they found out and confirmed the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ), knew they had to honor this new-found principle. They realized that nothing could irritate and infuriate Pharaoh more than their commitment and honoring of Allah's authority and power. And what transpired in Pharaoh's time is reflected by what is happening in the present day. With all the Zionist mainstream media-projected antipathy against Islam and Muhammad (ﷺ), perhaps the hardest and potentially most perilous choice one could make in an Islam-antagonistic world is to decide to become a Muslim. Yet, unlike the gains Christian missionary work is making among the unlettered and the starving who do not have the luxury to know better, it is the principled smart people — the literate, the activists, the mathematicians, the scientists, the truthful journalists, the professors, the experts, and their ilk — that are becoming Muslims despite all the incessant public negativity that is blasted into the airwaves about Islam. Smart people, when they apply their intelligence to a world they know could be better and more equitable to all humanity, are “turned on” by the Qur'an: the Qur'an challenges them, provides answers, and removes doubt in a way that the secular world has been deficient and inadequate. They are seeking a principled authority because they are fed up with temporal secular authorities in the visage of Uncle Sam, whose “values” are only concerned with gaining wealth and retaining power. This has not gone unnoticed by the pharaoh in Washington, hence his ferociousness in attacking any social consciousness or public assemblage that is remotely Islamic in nature, and his bottomless well-spring of vitriol against the public and historical persona of that consciousness: Muhammad (ﷺ).

For those who are having problems understanding the “subversion” of Moses (ﷺ), they need only to look around today and

watch how the superpowers in the world are calling Muslims terrorists, radicals, and subversives. The only thing that sets Muslims apart from the followers of other religions is the Islamic commitment to Allah's justice and equality that can only come from His authority and power. Muslims who are true to their faith and trust in Allah (ﷻ) cannot accord to any ruler the authority of God, or any portion of it, because what belongs to Allah is His and not any king's or president's.

Today's anti-scriptural power bloc, with all the information available to it and the technological means to project its culture, preempted a mass conversion of people to scripture by contriving its stage-managed war on terror against the up and coming Islamic populism. To see a coming day when they have no power and no authority, when power and authority are referred to the almighty Creator, annoys and vexes them to no end.

### **Deification of Man Leads Inevitably to Concentration of Power**

The next portion of this lesson moves into the clandestine thoughts of power usurpers and authority supplanters. Their back-room discussions concentrate on the band of people who uphold scripture and try to give currency to its core meanings. Even though Mūsá (ﷺ) initially had only a few people with him, the illegitimate authorities would not stop harassing them, to such an extent that the latter became scared of how bleak their future may turn out to be. The narratives about Mūsá (ﷺ) in the Qur'an demonstrate that the thought of Mūsá and his numerically inferior numbers leaving Egypt without Pharaoh's permission deeply shook his collaborators and henchmen. Pharaoh's anger disrupted his mental balance such that he began to think that he was the disadvantaged one. Hence he had to do something to bring back the aura of his pomp and pride,

**And the elites among Pharaoh's people said, "Will you allow Moses and his people to spread corruption on earth, and to [cause your people to] forsake you and your gods?" Pharaoh replied, "We shall slay their sons**



**in great numbers and shall spare [only] their women: for, verily, we hold sway over them!” (7:127).**

In Pharaoh’s mind the contest was not about whether or not he or God is the deity. Rather, it was about the identity of the authority on earth: him or God. The Qur’an contains no words about any encounter in which Pharaoh claimed to be the creator, or in which he asserted power and authority in the cosmos or in the world of the unknown. What is known, however, is that he occupied the position of ultimate civic authority over his own people, and by doing so he blurred or diminished God as authority in that realm. The people he held sway over through the institution of slavery, the Children of Israel, were aggrieved and violated. This is what happened to the people in Egypt under Pharaoh and that is what will happen to any people in the world who designate their own pharaohs to rule in disregard to Allah’s absolute authority and preponderant power presence.

The Egyptian people did not worship Pharaoh per se. They had their own gods and Pharaoh may have had his own gods as well, **“And... will you allow Moses and his people... to [cause your people to] forsake you and your gods?”** These Egyptians though were Pharaoh’s subordinates in the political, civil, and social sense of the word. They had no license to veto his orders or to annul his commands. He ruled, and he ruled with an iron fist. And because Pharaoh had them on his legal leash they were his subjects, and not the subjects of Allah (ﷻ).

Allah’s authority is the bedrock of His transcendency, high quality, and favorable position over man. If any human being tries to assume this divine trait, then he imposes his superficial status through the instruments of state power over others, that is, his own population. Conforming to Allah (ﷻ) — *‘ibādaḥ* — means that this relationship of authority and power ought to be placed where it belongs: Allah is man’s authority and the only real power for him to recognize, and man is expected to honor this perfection and benevolent dominance of Allah. People who accede to laws formulated by other people become the latter’s subordinates and conform to them.

A corroborating *āyah* in this insightful Scripture says, **“They designated their rabbis and monks as lords to the exclusion of Allah” (9:31)**. When ‘Adī ibn Ḥātim al-Ṭā’ī, who was a Christian on his way to becoming a Muslim, exclaimed upon hearing this *āyah*, “O Messenger of Allah! They did not conform to them [the rabbis and monks].” To this, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied,

*Yes [they did]. For they [the rabbis and monks] made [secularly] lawful what is [scripturally] unlawful, and they made what is [scripturally] unlawful to be [secularly] lawful. And these people followed [their regulations and laws]. That is how they conformed to them.*<sup>388</sup>

As mentioned in this correct Qur’an, Pharaoh at one point did refer to himself as a deity, **“I know of no other deity for you except me” (28:38)**. This would have to be understood in the context of Pharaoh extending his power position on earth into his authoritative status. A more extensive rendition of what he said to his people at the time is provided by other *āyāt*,

**And Pharaoh issued a call to his people, saying, “O my people! Am I not in possession of the Egyptian dominion; and these rivers flow beneath me — can you not see? Am I not better than this [Moses] who is pathetic, and who is barely visible? If only a golden bracelet were cast upon him or had he come in the company of angels?” (43:51–53).**

This was Pharaoh’s impression of his majesty: the comparison between his affluence and the paucity of Mūsá (ﷺ). In swaying public opinion, Pharaoh was calling on the people to look at him and his wealth, status, and prestige, and then to compare that to Moses and his scarcity, resignation, and unpopularity. And so with the force of this argument he added, for good measure, that with this being the case he (Pharaoh) knows of no other human who qualifies to be immortal or a deity except him. This was a sneaky way of him saying

that if the lawgiver must be the deity, then they should consider him to be their deity.

**“Are you [Pharaoh] going to leave Moses and his people to diffuse corruption on earth, while he dismisses you and your deities?”** Naturally, from a secular and anti-divine point of view, any groundswell of support for Moses (ﷺ) was tantamount to corruption and troublemaking on earth. Since the major ramification of Mūsá’s message was the delegitimization of Pharaoh and his power structure, the latter perceived Moses as a subversive. Pharaoh began to think along the lines of what today might be called an “Internal Security Act” — an act designed to place subversive scripturalists and other “God-only” groups under tight surveillance and rigid control. Such enactments are designed to outlaw any conspiracy, peaceful or violent, that has as its purpose the establishment of a foreign-controlled government in the land. In the contemporary Muslim-majority world, especially draconian governments establish subversive Activities Control Boards that identify (and target) scriptural “action” groups and “fronts,” requiring such groups to register with the chief of justice, to list their officers and members, to release financial records, and to catalog any printing equipment under their control. Publications of these organizations are generally labeled as “subversive” or “Islamic” propaganda. Infiltrated fraternities lose all rights under such excessively authoritarian measures. Individual members of any of these groups are not allowed to hold office in a state-sponsored religious organization, obtain a passport, or work in any public office; they are also barred from going to any military facilities. National security measures of this nature broaden the scope of espionage and sedition laws while narrowing immigration requirements for the purpose of exclusion and prevention, thereby providing for the deportation of scriptural strangers, unasimilated Islamic types, and equivalent oddballs. Further provisions have established procedures for detention of suspected saboteurs in an emergency as it might develop.

With every passing day after its first encounter with Moses (ﷺ), Pharaoh’s royal establishment in Egypt became more and more certain that Moses’ program of social justice was fundamentally

incompatible with Pharaoh's system; the two could not coexist. In the minds of Pharaoh and his elite, the irreconcilability between the two was becoming dangerous and deadly.

Pharaoh could get away with his nonsensical "logic" because he was standing on a pyramid of centuries and generations of "dumbing down" his own people. His military and security apparatus had everything and everyone under tight control that whatever Pharaoh said immediately became the social standard as well as the law of the land, **"And he [Pharaoh] took his people lightly... for, in fact, they were a degenerate people" (43:54)**. The fact of the matter is that Pharaoh would not have been able to undervalue his people had they decided to throw off his yoke and live a life of justice and equality wherein Allah (ﷻ) is the Sovereign, the Superior, and the Sustainer. Peoples committed to Allah cannot be so easily dismissed in the manner Pharaoh did with his own people. People with dignity and self-respect will revolt against any "laws" and "standards" that violate those of the Almighty.

Pharaoh, knowing his own people would not budge from their secure perch on the fence, duly perceived Mūsá (ﷺ) — a man of conviction and action — and the Children of Israel as an existential threat to his political power and economic structure. Therefore his savage statements were only a natural extension of the new constriction he was feeling, **"He [Pharaoh] said, 'We will kill their children and spare their women; and we are in a position to subdue them.'"** The Children of Israel had already suffered terribly during the period in which Moses was born. This same baby-killing policy was put into effect at that time. And it was Pharaoh and his partners in crime who were responsible for these macabre activities,

**Verily, Pharaoh had reached a high status [of glory] on earth as he divided its people into classes and factions. He overpowered a proportion of them while he killed their sons and spared their women: he was, by any measure, one of the *mufsid*s (28:4).**

Pharaoh's regime was not unique by any means; rather it is a metaphor, and hence the word *pharaoh* in this *āyah* can just as easily be replaced by *caesar*, *czar*, *king*, *president*, or *prime minister*, in short, by the title of anyone who behaves in the manner of Pharaoh.

When Mūsá (ﷺ) was speaking to his people, reminding them of Allah's presence and their duty of being patient against all odds, he was trying to get them to understand that transformational change happens on Allah's watch and not on theirs, that power leveraged in their favor would happen when He Himself decides. And if anything, Allah's decision is based less on something arbitrary than on their readiness and preparation, which is generally achieved through struggle, fortitude, and hardship — that is, with a very heavy dose of *taqwá*. Therefore, through these tempering stages of a maturing social *taqwá*, Mūsá put up with all their complaints, still praying to Allah (ﷻ) for their deliverance and salvation. What Mūsá realized and they did not is that the earth itself is on a historical course of reverting to the leadership of the oppressed who affirm Allah's (ﷻ) authority and power,

**[And] Moses said to his people, “Turn to Allah for aid, and have patience in hardship. Verily, all the earth belongs to Allah: He gives it as a heritage to such as He wills of His subjects; and the future belongs to people conscious [of Allah's power presence]!” [But] they [the Children of Israel] said, “We have suffered hurt before you came to us and since you have come to us!” [Moses] replied, “It may well be that your Sustainer will destroy your foe and make you inherit the earth: and thereupon He will behold how you act” (7:128–129).**

Prophets are in the company of Allah (ﷻ) more than they are in the company of their own people and society. Here, Mūsá (ﷺ) relates to his own people words that come from a conscience cultivated by thoroughgoing communion with Allah. This is where everyone should be, because it is the only secure and inspiring lo-

cation to be in — especially when there are fierce governments and ruthless regimes on the warpath against the scripturally committed. The power of these governments and states is all transitory. It will expire, no doubt. When the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth decides to terminate these pharaohs and their ilk, they will be gone post haste. And the future awaits those who had kept their rapport and good “fellowship” with Allah. Whatever time that may take is irrelevant. In the meantime no doubt should ever find a bridgehead to a committed Muslim’s heart and soul. Never.

The Children of Israel, on the other hand, as their historical character confirms, are a different animal altogether: they remain, as always, ill-humored, hot-tempered, and bad-natured, **“They said, ‘We were harmed before you [Moses] came to us and after you came to us.’”** In effect, they were saying to Moses (ﷺ) that he did not make a difference; they were at a loss before he showed up and they remained at a loss even with his command. But Moses did not give up on them; he tried his best to influence them in a positive way, to nudge them in the right direction, and to induce a change in their whining disposition,

**[Moses] replied, “It may well be that your Sustainer will destroy your enemy and make you inherit the earth: and thereupon He will behold how you behave” (7:129).**

Mūsá wanted the Children of Israel to be the mediators of Allah’s will on earth. Divine social laws are in need of human beings for enactment. People qualify for this role only when they conform to Allah (ﷻ) and try not to run away from Him. Some of these social laws may apply in a negative way, especially when the conformity to Him is weak or nonexistent. If people turn against God, then He will turn against them. There is no “special relationship” here, **“And thereupon He will see how you conduct yourselves.”**

### Natural and Social Laws Work Together in an Integrated System

This historical-cum-contemporary lesson now enters into its final scene, concentrating on the consequences Pharaoh and his elite will have to endure for the injustice and persecution they themselves instigated. Mūsá's trust and hope are now validated as the ominous outcome awaiting Pharaoh and his close advisers arrives. At this point, the earth relieves itself of a megalomaniacal and vainglorious Pharaoh. The patience of the Children of Israel did, in fact, "pay off": Pharaoh and his confidants got what was coming to them. Allah (ﷻ) never fails. Pharaoh had multiple opportunities to make amends, to "straighten up his act," or to simply climb down from his heights of hubris, but he proved himself incapable of doing so; and thus approached the day of earthly reckoning,

And most certainly We overwhelmed Pharaoh's intimates with drought and scarcity of fruits, so that they might take it to heart. But whenever good fortune alighted upon them, they would say, "This is [but] our due"; and whenever affliction befell them, they would blame their evil fortune on Mūsá and those who followed him. Oh, verily, their [evil] fortune had been decreed by Allah — but most of them knew it not. And they said [to Mūsá], "Whatever sign [of power] you may produce before us in order to cast a spell upon us thereby, we shall not trust you!"

Thereupon We let loose upon them floods, and [plagues of] locusts, and lice, and frogs, and [water turning into] blood — distinct signs [all]; but they gloried in their arrogance, for they were people lost in sin. And whenever a plague struck them, they would cry, "O Mūsá, pray for us to your Sustainer on the strength of the covenant [of prophethood] He has made with you! If you remove this plague from us, we will truly believe in you, and will let the Children of Israel go with you!" But whenever We removed the plague from

them, giving them time to make good their promise, lo!, they would break their word.

And so We inflicted Our retribution on them, and caused them to drown in the sea, because they had given the lie to Our [power] messages and had been heedless of them; whereas to the people who [in the past] had been deemed utterly low, We gave as their heritage the eastern and western parts of the land that We had blessed. And [thus] your Sustainer's good promise to the Children of Israel was fulfilled in result of their patience in adversity; whereas We utterly destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had wrought, and all that they had built (7:130–137).

Pharaoh had the opportunity to try to make good on his threats. He pursued his national security interests in his own “logical” way. In the process he killed the male babies, causing the women left behind to bear the social stigma of trying to survive on their own without a generation of men to become their husbands. Mūsá (ﷺ) and these crushed people, the Children of Israel, endured and persevered through this harsh life. For the most part, they did not lose hope in Allah's will through these dark days of official repression. Certainly, they may have teemed around Mūsá, having their aberrational moments of disappointment with him, but overall they pulled through this social trauma. In the end, their patience through adversity clarified what was at stake: two distinct and diametrically opposed sides emerged — the side of Mūsá versus the side of Pharaoh, the commitment to Allah (ﷻ) versus rejection of Allah, and the material power of Pharaoh versus the moral power of Mūsá. The naked power of governments eventually gives way from abjection and attrition when the power of heaven is unleashed at the proper time.

**“And most certainly did We overwhelm Pharaoh's people with drought and scarcity of fruits [low yields of agricultural produce], so that they might take it to heart.”** This was meant to be the first warning to a “power-driven society.” What was once a



climate friendly country turned into an arid expanse — a climatic zone in which potential evapotranspiration (the maximum loss of water, given an unlimited supply) exceeds precipitation. Geographers use an upper limit of 250 mm/10 in of annual rainfall to define the zone, which is found between latitudes 15 and 30 degrees north and south of the Equator. Most of the world's hot deserts are found in the arid zone. Climates of the world are not static; they can and do shift. In this context, the climate shift was related to social policies and governmental decisions. Could Egypt have been forced by its official and entrenched social injustice policies into a climate deviation? Could the desertification of certain parts of the world have been brought about by God-defying designs and power-centered political programs, as was the case in Pharaoh's Egypt? Was there a hint in the desertification of Egypt that preceded the collapse of that civilization? Environmental degradation of arid and semi-arid areas through over-cultivation, overgrazing, deforestation, and bad irrigation practices are symptoms of a greater problem that resides at the nexus of destructive social policy and natural catastrophe. The desertification of a region in the world at some historical-social juncture can be attributed to changing climatic patterns that themselves are related to man's political and economic clash with the divine directives revealed to him. The land loses its fertility, and is no longer able to support its population. The problem is worsened in many regions by climatic instability (particularly drought), by rapidly-growing populations, and by cash cropping, which reduces the area available for the production of food crops for the local population.

When meteorological data begins to show there is a serious climate change that will have devastating effects on a particular society, and when that runs concurrent to this society being overrun by a predatory anti-scriptural government, it becomes the official policy of such a government to keep silent on "acts of nature" closing in on it. Even in today's highly advanced and technologically accomplished societies none dare tread the lines between climate changes and governmental policy and laws. The long-term prevailing weather conditions in a region are contingent on the human conduct within that region.

There are a number of different schemes for dividing the Earth into climatic regions, the majority of which are based on a combination of indices of mean annual temperature, mean monthly temperature, annual precipitation totals, and seasonality. The climate of a place is influenced by several factors. Latitude determines the amount of solar radiation received, with the greatest in equatorial regions and the least in polar regions. Elevation affects both temperature and precipitation; mountainous areas are generally cooler and wetter. Locations close to the sea or large bodies of water moderate temperature; continental areas are generally more arid and affected by greater extremes of temperature. Aspect is of local importance; in the northern hemisphere, south- and west-facing slopes are warmer than north- and east-facing slopes. The scientific study of climate, describing and attempting to explain climatic differences from place to place, is known as *climatology*.<sup>389</sup>

In today's world there is or should be enough information to alert the public conscience about pending changes in climate patterns. The scientific study of global atmospheric processes — the receipt of solar radiation, evaporation, evapotranspiration, precipitation, and the determination of, and changes in, atmospheric pressure (and, therefore, wind) — should alert those who are living within a God-defying system of a potential disaster on the horizon. Meteorology is generally concerned with the short-term processes (that is, hours and days rather than months and seasons) operating in the troposphere and mesosphere, which are the atmospheric layers of the Earth's weather systems. Satellites are now the main source of meteorological data, the first purpose-built device being the American Tiros I, launched in 1960. The data is used for weather forecasting, and in meteorological and climatological research.<sup>390</sup>

The problem with separating “church from state” is that it bifurcates the two bodies of information available to man — the scriptural body represented by this accurate Qur'an and the scientific body represented by the “facts” and “discoveries” that belong to the secular world — both of which are supposed to be synergistic, instead of at odds. This unhappy separation of the two puts

humanity in a position of vulnerability as it traverses the course of civilizational eras without utilizing the full spectrum of integrated information available to it. Why secular governments do this should be well understood by now: they get rid of God so that they can impose their own unjust authority over the rest of humanity. But why scholars of this Scripture fail to direct attention to this synchronicity between revealed information (facts) and discovered information (facts) boggles the mind.

Climate and atmospheric changes, and weather patterns are not freak occurrences of nature, as some would like to say. They are a serious reflection of how social strategies and governmental policies can strain nature to the point of violent eruption. Informed and thoughtful scripturalists know this to be the pending godly social law taking its course. Pharaoh and his class of scientists could not see it coming. They were so engrossed in their ungodly ways that they acted as if nothing was happening. And if they did have a “hunch” that something is in the offing they kept it hidden from public view. Nothing in this world on the scale of violent and deadly storms, volcanoes, earthquakes, floods, continents in collision, etc. happened as a matter of coincidence. These occurrences take place within a set of natural and social laws — balanced and counterbalanced.

And so, to reiterate, there are two categories of people who are estranged from each other. There are the committed Muslims who read the Qur'an and know, or should know, that there is a relationship between governments on a collision course with the Almighty and the ever more cataclysmic natural disasters that begin to inundate a fragile eco- and social system. In due time, such governments and their societies will disintegrate because of their anti-Godly official and mass behavior, but how much of the earth they end up destroying depends on a critical mass of committed Muslims doing their duty and restraining the former from ruining themselves and those around them. And then there are the scientists and researchers who are tuned in to the subtleties and nuances of “pattern indicators” and who sense that unalterable changes of a huge magnitude are set to impact certain areas of the

world. Each category living in isolation of the other is an indicator of the strength of the alienation that attends the separation of church from state, morality from legality, and the authority of God from the activity of man.

Trekking through the mental insights this Qur'an provides, one becomes more aware (and more responsible for) spotlight issues, such as global warming. The *greenhouse effect*, or *global warming* in environmental science, is a popular term for the effect that certain gases of the Earth's lower atmosphere have on surface temperatures. A drier climate, the result of global warming, would increase pressure on water supplies, encourage the spread of pests like cockroaches and extend the reach of deadly tropical diseases such as malaria and yellow fever.<sup>391</sup>

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the most important greenhouse gas — and is produced by all plants. It also comes from burning fossil fuels, like coal and oil, chiefly for electricity and cars. Even a limited rise in the Earth's average surface temperature might lead to at least partial melting of the polar ice caps and hence a major rise in sea level, along with other severe environmental disturbances. It is thought that carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere have increased by nearly a third since the Industrial Revolution. Other greenhouse gases include methane (produced by sewage and rotting processes) and CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons).<sup>392</sup>

Normally the gases in the planet's atmosphere act like the glass in a greenhouse, making the planet habitable. As man adds to these gases with his own (industrial) emissions, he is increasing the "double-glazing" effect of this process, and accelerating global warming. The ten warmest years in the last 130 all occurred in the last two decades of the 20th century; at least three of these were recorded in the 1990s.<sup>393</sup> In order to stem the inevitable prospect of an uninhabitable world, given the direction it has been going in, a variety of studies have been conducted over the past century to gather data and to generate a set of classifications that will help decision makers understand where the Earth is and perhaps where it should be:

1. A study in New Zealand classified climate on the basis of human psychological response. Each climate was assessed for

- its favorability rating, taking into account sunshine, temperature, dryness, and lack of wind.
2. By combining the two main elements of climate — temperature and precipitation — scientists have identified eleven basic elements. A climatic boundary may occur later from year to year because of fluctuating conditions. Climate describes general average weather conditions, for example tropical or tundra. Weather describes short-term conditions. Thus, a semi-arid region may sometimes experience a few days of rainy weather.
  3. In 1915, Dr. Ellsworth Huntington, an American geographer, published *Civilization and Climate*, postulating that climate exerted control over human activity. He even suggested that climatic changes explained the downfall of the Inca and Roman empires.
  4. In 1918 the Russian meteorologist Vladimir Koppen published a climate classification based on mean temperature and precipitation, recognizing five main groups based on vegetation types. The Koppen classification is still in use. No climate classification is entirely satisfactory because of the reliance on averages. Factors contributing to a classification include temperature, precipitation, sunshine, wind, humidity, and amount of cloud cover.
  5. W.H. Terjung, an American scientist, identified two climate indices: a comfort index and a wind-effect index. He noted that, for example, people feel uncomfortable if high humidity at high temperatures prevents perspiration.
  6. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change is a panel established by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program in 1988 to assess the scientific information relating to climatic change, such as emissions of greenhouse gases and ensuing alterations to the Earth's climate. It also assesses environmental and socio-economic impacts of climatic change, and formulates response strategies. Comprised of more than 400 scientists from 25 countries, the panel first reported in 1990 that emissions of gases from human activity are enhancing the greenhouse

effect, and predicted (on the basis of one scenario) a possible global warming of 0.3 °C/decade during the next century.<sup>393</sup>

The world is abuzz with warnings and omens. But the pieces of this puzzle are not being put together expeditiously enough because governments of vested interests are inured to their greed-based policies to the detriment of their own societies and humanity at large. And so was the case with Pharaoh's "on-a-roll" system. It had no time for Moses (ﷺ) the orphan telling Pharaoh the chief executive of the land what to do. Even when the Egyptian government and society of that time were struck with natural calamities they still could not see something in the offing.

In fact, some "positive developments" were used to offset the disastrous news. Those developments they attributed to their intrinsic qualities, and how they were at the head of all nations on earth. In scrambling the message they were supposed to be getting, the Egyptian power magnates would attribute the calamities and natural disasters they deserved to Mūsá (ﷺ) and those who were with him,

**But whenever good fortune alighted upon them, they would say, "This is [but] our due"; and whenever affliction befell them, they would blame their evil fortune on Mūsá and those who followed him (7:131).**

Power-centered figures look at the world through lenses that are colored by their own biases and disdain. Everything positive they attribute to themselves, and everything negative they throw upon their enemies. These ego-centered ruling classes lose their sense of proportionality. As they see it, the world rotates around them. This applied to the ancient Egyptian civilization and today it applies equally to Euro-American civilization, which does not hesitate to tell everyone that all the good things in life come from its "values" and ways of doing things, and all bad things come from its enemies. It feels insulted at the proposition that God is intimately involved with the "positive" and "negative" fortunes or misfortunes they ex-

perience. When the human mind no longer has a capacity to think of God in the natural and social laws of existence it has basically condemned itself. Even if God were to “break” the laws of physics that they know very well, their hearts and souls are beyond such a divine gesture, **“And they said [to Moses], ‘Whatever sign [of power] you may produce before us in order to cast a spell upon us thereby, we shall not believe in you!’”**

Some people are jolted by miracles and shocked back into their rational selves by supernatural acts. But then, there are the bullheaded power maniacs who would rebuff one of Allah’s prophets even as the latter was bending the rules of physics backward. When the psychology of the ruling class reaches that degree of imperviousness then the unavoidable event is about to unfold. This is when Allah (ﷻ) gives them a preview of who really has power,

**Thereupon We let loose upon them floods, and [plagues of] locusts, and lice, and frogs, and [water turning into] blood — distinct signs [all]; but they gloried in their arrogance, for they were people lost in sin (7:133).**

In consequence of the intransigence of its capital class, the Egyptian society was forced to endure extreme weather conditions — drought followed by flooding, both of which were anathema to seasonal agriculture. Then they were swarmed by locusts, which not only ate all their agricultural produce, but beyond that, devoured their trees, plants, and timber. It is said that this “plague” spared the Children of Israel, and the Egyptians sought refuge in Israeli homes and domiciles. But when Mūsá (ﷺ) pointed his staff after seven days toward the east and the west as a petition for the end of this plague, with the same Egyptians witnessing what was going on, they still preferred to dismiss him.

A short period thereafter, Egyptian society was blighted with lice; these creatures ate the microorganisms that were not eaten by the locusts. As before, these people begged Mūsá (ﷺ) to end this scourge, and he obliged. But like a drug addict on his way to overdosing, they could not leave their condemned ways. So Allah (ﷻ)

sent upon them invasive frogs that would enter their homes and overrun their utensils and kitchenware. The frogs were so numerous and ascendant that they would jump into all alcoves of the home and cavities of the human body. Their beds were full of frogs. Frogs were springing out of pots and pans. The people got fed up once again, and once again they appealed to Mūsá (ﷺ) to help stop this widespread pestilence. When Mūsá helped in ending this affliction by his prayers and pleas, these people behaved as if nothing had happened, and they resumed their ungodly and God-denying ways.

Lastly, with one affliction after another, the Almighty turned their water into blood. Any water they went for, from wells or from springs, from streams or from the river, had all become blood. Pharaoh, with all his pomp and pride, was unable to do anything about all these plagues.<sup>394</sup>

In this passage of *āyāt*, Allah (ﷻ) expresses His power, which some people call miracles, not only to the ruling classes — or the scientists in society — but to the general public before the consummating punishment comes due. This could last a matter of months or it could take as long as a few years. But when these rulers and their societies persist in objecting to Allah and persecuting His disciples, despite all the opportunities given them and more than sufficient time for them to reconsider and repent, then at that time the long forestalled punishment unfurls. In the midst of this pre-punishment turmoil, the oppressed, underprivileged, and powerless people who stood their ground, did not compromise their principles, and “sweated it out” will, in one way or another, be protected and rescued. The ruling power class, on the other hand, will perish,

**And so We inflicted Our retribution on them, and caused them to drown in the sea, because they had contravened Our [power] messages and had been heedless of them; whereas to the people who [in the past] had been deemed powerless, We gave as their heritage the eastern and western parts of the land that We had blessed. And [thus] your Sustainer’s good promise to the Children of Israel was fulfilled as a result of their**



**patience in adversity; whereas We decidedly destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had wrought, and all that they had constructed (7:136–137).**

In the end, how did this world-class Pharaoh fare? He drowned. Unlike other places in this meticulous Book, the moments and details of his drowning are not highlighted. In this context, what is relevant is that he and his power circle died by drowning, **“And We inflicted Our retribution on them, and caused them to drown in the sea.”** With one master stroke from Allah (ﷻ), this imperial king and his entourage were gone — from the heights of glory and power to the depths of infamy and impotency.

Once this “all-powerful” Pharaoh was left as a floating body on the waves of the sea, the narrative turns to the new responsibilities placed on the shoulders of the Children of Israel. At this time in their history they qualified, coming out of these trials and tribulations, to assume a leadership position. Their future seat of leadership would no longer be in Egypt but northward in historical Syria. All this would happen outside of Egypt — many, many years after Mūsá’s death, and after they had endured a type of exile that extended over 40 years. Years do not count here as much as an evolving social character that matures from one event into its following event,

**We gave as their heritage the eastern and western parts of the land that We had blessed. And [thus] your Sustainer’s good promise to the Children of Israel was fulfilled as a result of their patience in adversity; whereas We completely destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had wrought, and all that they had established (7:137).**

These poor and unfortunate Israelis who were being killed as babies, humiliated as single-parent households, discriminated against as a “minority,” and enslaved as second- and third-class citizens were now, because of their steadfast patience under impossible

circumstances with Moses (ﷺ), qualified to become leaders of their own destiny. Qualifying to lead is not supposed to be easy. This lesson details the conditions the Children of Israel had to endure for them to finally gain their freedom, and to develop the suitability to lead. This is echoed in other *āyāt* in this Book of reliable history,

**And We want to favor those who have been oppressed on earth and to render them leaders and to render them heirs, and to fortify them on earth, and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān and their armies [composed] of these [oppressed] what they dreaded seeing (28:5–6).**

These *āyāt* perfectly juxtapose people working for and through Allah (ﷻ) with people working against and in opposition to Him. Pharaoh ended up a corpse on the waves of the sea, surrounded by the remains of his “high and mighty” elites, whereas the poor and the powerless, who were an eyesore in Pharaoh’s view, were now on their way to a life that acknowledged Allah as sovereign, as supreme, and as the only sustainer. Allah rescued the dwellers of the Egyptian slums from slavery and bondage when they kept the good company of Moses and Aaron (ﷺ). Moses and these “underdogs” awaited the time of relief as he struck the sea and it parted for them to cross over into liberty and self-direction, **“And We inspired Mūsá, ‘Strike the sea with your staff,’ and it split — each side [of the water] was as big as a tremendous mountain” (26:63).**

In the eyes of officialdom Mūsá was a nobody. In the eyes of Allah (ﷻ), he was everything. Mūsá and his brother Hārūn (ﷺ) stood up to the mightiest state on earth, a state that enslaved the Children of Israel for centuries. The two of them spoke truth to power. They were tagged as undesirables, “persons of interest,” or subversives — but this did not affect them in the least.

With a few millennia between then and now, today there are Zionists and imperialists in a “Jewish” shell who claim that the Holy Land belongs to them. They converged upon it from all corners of the world saying that this land was given to them by God. Reading and understanding history as it is rendered throughout

the *sūrah*s and *āyāt* of this Qur'an, it is apparent that the Children of Israel who accompanied Moses (ﷺ) out of Egypt were not assigned the Holy Land just because they were the Children of Israel. They were assigned the Holy Land because they had a serious and existential disagreement with Pharaoh who claimed he was the legal ruler and legitimate authority over them. They took issue with Pharaoh in light of the guidance coming to them from God. They had to struggle to leave Egypt, and then they had to struggle to build God's way of life in the Holy Land. The reason they moved out of Egypt was to affirm God, His authority, His power, and His sovereignty.

The argument could be made that they had no confidence in God per se, and that all they really wanted was relief from centuries of humiliation and degradation — and free of the latter, they would have the liberty to do as they desired, even to the extent of taking on gods of their own making as the next set of *āyāt* demonstrate. However, the two points are not mutually exclusive: after hundreds of years of slavery, everything else they may have tried for their own liberation had failed, and only divine intervention had ultimately lifted them from their misery. So, while they were ready in principle to devote themselves to God Almighty, circumstances would soon reveal that they could not so easily shed the character of servitude to God's temporal rivals.

Nonetheless, this is not why the Zionists and imperialists came to colonize the Holy Land. They wanted a national canton to lodge their racist souls in. There was nothing racial or racist about Moses (ﷺ) and his people, even though their enemy Pharaoh may have been a nationalist and a racist in his own right. The racism and nationalism of Zionism carry no weight in the narrative of Moses, no justification in the chapters of the Bible, and no rationalization in the common sense of man. Even some of those Israelis who left Egypt thought that life from then on was going to be ease and luxury, not unlike the life that Pharaoh was living. But it was not meant to be that way. When the time came for them to fight a grand power in the Holy Land they balked and declined,

But they [the Israelis] said, “O Moses! Never shall we march into that [land] so long as those others are in it. March, then, you and your Sustainer, and fight, both of you — for we are staying right here, firm and determined [not to fight]” (5:24).

This drift away from the high responsibilities and the associated struggle is part of human nature. Even the Muslims who experienced the victory at Badr in the company of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) thought that victory would come automatically just because they said they are “God’s people.” And so when they encountered a military reversal at the Battle of Uḥud they were surprised and shocked at how something like that could happen to them. These Muslims thought that just because Allah (ﷻ) says, “Allah has decreed, ‘I will overcome — Me and My apostles’” (58:21), and “And it is due upon Us to give victory to the committed Muslims” (30:47), they do not have to do anything in the manner of preparation, fortitude, and sacrifice. After that debacle at Uḥud, they realized that these *āyāt* have to be understood in the broader outline of the engagement of Allah’s will with man’s will, for He also says, “If you help Allah, He will help you” (47:7), and “And do not dispute with each other lest you fail and your sails lose wind” (8:46).

True, the Holy Land is a prize for those who struggle for the cause of God, those who want to demonstrate and put into action what it means to be subjects, servants, and subordinates of God on a piece of land. When the children of Isaac (ﷺ) struggled toward that end they did govern in and around the Holy Land. But then when they failed, the responsibility of godly governance went to the children of Ismā‘īl (ﷺ). And they did so until they too lost sight of their geo-ideological purpose.

Now there is a “fight to the finish” between a Zionist ideology that recognizes only a “Jewish race” as the legitimate occupants of the Holy Land, and an Islamic inclusivity that affirms the brotherhood of man and looks at the same land as a sanctuary for the world’s displaced, dispossessed, and oppressed. This Zionist ideology violates everything sacred and every God-revealed value of justice

and equality. Current history is littered with the nuclear Zionist state's acts of war; its attacks against innocent populations; its bombings of urban centers; its depriving the countryside of water; its erection of concrete, electric, and electronic barriers all around the Holy Land; its deployment of over 600 checkpoints; and its economic strangulation of the Palestinians whose only crime has been the desire to discover their historical self and to live up to the responsibilities of bringing people to God as He had ordered. It is a twist of fate to compare the Israelis who left Egypt for God and justice with the Israelis who left Europe and other countries for colonization and mass injustice — with the imperialist powers of the Euro-American axis entrenched at the United Nations in tow.

We, the committed Muslims of today, are the ideological extension of Mūsá and all the other Prophets (ﷺ). These prophets did not fear the military might of their enemies. They knew that Allah (ﷻ) was and is on their side as long as they keep their trust, their covenant, and their commitment to Him. Our perseverance in times of adversity like this has the potential of bringing down the natural habitat upon the structures and establishments of imperialism and Zionism. We cannot tamper with the solid and principled position we have inherited. Despite this, there are some decision-makers within the Islamic movement who think they are smart by working the imperialist channels.

As we think through the meanings of these *āyāt*, there is an Israeli Zionist nation-state that is currently trying to starve the Islamic leaders in Ghazzah (Gaza) and Palestine, and threatening war against the Islamic leaders in Lebanon and Iran. Can anyone hear one word about God's will and God's command? Not from the Zionists. And that speaks volumes about who they really are. Enabling this killer Zionist nation-state is the grand coordinated complex of imperialism. Beneath the overarching bodies of Zionism and imperialism is a virtually deaf, dumb, and blind population of peoples who sing hymns on Saturdays and Sundays trying to sooth their conscience in churches and temples that can no longer speak truth to power. The more "religious" a person is in this decrepit West the more he is supposed to dislike or oppose Muslims who are

yearning for freedom in their own land of God-sanctioned self-determination. All these denominations and sects have lost their way. This Qur'an offers them and us a light at the end of this dark and historical tunnel. Will anyone in his right mind and healthy heart open up to Allah's message of salvation and incontrovertible truth?

We challenge the religious leaders who cannot speak out against Zionism from the Jewish tradition, and the religious leaders who cannot speak out against imperialism from the Christian tradition. We challenge them to tell us what the New Testament or what Jesus (ﷺ) would say about today's international crime of Zionism and imperialism. The same we pose to the rabbis and learned Jewish personalities. The day is fast approaching when their silence will be identified to all and sundry as complicity with the warmongers in Pharaoh's character who rule in Tel Aviv and Washington.

It is ironic to say that the less religious people in these two contexts are the ones who show more willingness to speak truth to power and to stand up for justice and peace as well as the values and principles that uphold them. With all their rich history one would think that those belonging to the Jewish faith would be the most vociferous people on earth in their opposition to Zionism and Israel — but that is not the case. Has their millennial suffering through tyranny and banishment been all for naught as they go on feeding the Zionist pharaohs of the Holy Land with their silence, indifference, and complicity?

## Israeli History as It Should Be Told

The chronicle of Moses (ﷺ) in this *sūrah* alludes to yet another lesson that has been abandoned by the Children of Israel. This segment of a series of related events unfolds after Allah (ﷻ) had delivered the Children of Israel from their powerful enemy; and after that enemy — the Pharaoh and his hierarchy — were drowned. Actually, all that the Pharaoh was doing and had done against Moses and the Children of Israel was divinely terminated. Hence, at this point in Israeli history, Moses was no longer at odds with a perished Pharaoh and his superpower infrastructure; that battle had come to an end. Rather, Moses was now involved in a battle of another nature — a battle that would prove to have a deeper, wider, and longer range. This was a battle with a propensity in human nature not to assume its higher and divinely inspired responsibilities.

Now, the residual of past Israeli history — the psychological muddle that comes out of “social slavery” — came to the fore. The “human factor” pertaining to the Children of Israel had been deflowered and degraded. Suffering centuries of humiliation and tyranny, they had developed a proclivity to “twist and turn” or to “elude and evade.” On the other end of the spectrum, as institutional oppression fosters extreme behaviors in its objects, this complicated Israeli psychology throughout years of vassalage and enslavement turned reactively blustery and bullying. Compounding all this was their predilection toward timidity. They were incapable of shouldering responsibilities. This is what happens when communities and societies spend centuries in bondage and generations in serfdom. People during such times in their history prefer to live with social violence targeted against them, official intimidation, and legal degradation. They would sooner dodge systemic dangers, move about in the dark, and disguise their true selves while morphing into a mass complex of subordination and low status than to stand up with confidence at the cost of life and limb.

The Children of Israel were subjected to this lifestyle. They carry, maybe all the way to their genetic core, a history of subservience to secular society and imperial empires, and all their at-

tending features from religious practices to the fashions and fads of “high” society. The Egyptian pharaonic establishment, a forerunner of today’s imperial and colonial superpowers, was sporting its own flash of “modernity.” The official Egyptian degradation of God’s authority went as far as killing the sons of Israel and leaving their women to endure a future life without male counterparts and spouses. Oppression came in stages: there were lulls and flurries of active abuse. Through all of this, the Israeli society lived a life of disquiet, trouble, and abasement. It “grew up” throughout the ages nurturing conflicting feelings of humiliation and cowardice on one side of its psychology, and grudge and abrasiveness on the other side. Oppression can do this to people. And the Children of Israel were not an exception.

Contrast this with the dawn of the Muhammadi era when the leader of the Muslims at that time, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, was speaking to the governors of the different Islamic provinces of the day, “And do not whip them — for if you do, you humiliate them.”<sup>395</sup> Lashing people on their bare bodies mortifies and “cheapens” them. In the kingdom of God on earth — that is, the state of Islam and an Islamic state — people are fearless, positive, and resourceful. They live a life of dignity and honor. No ruler would be able to raise his hand to humiliate a Muslim or break the spirit of an Islamic community. Muslim citizens are not slaves of an established government and they are not subjects of a king. They belong to Allah (ﷻ) in their civil character and social spirit.

The Children of Israel, however, are a different story altogether. They were a people who were flogged into submission and confinement by Pharaoh’s ferocious authority. Even ordinary Egyptians were treated as slaves by that same maximalist authority. That Pharaoh did not think much of his own people is given by the *āyah*, “**And he [the Pharaoh] snubbed his [own] people and they obeyed him]**” (43:54).

These Israelis were physically abused during the Pharaoh’s reign. Then they were roughed up by the Roman totalitarian regime. It was only when Islam became a social reality and a cultural fact that these “alienated” people felt the serenity of a merciful



justice and tasted the sweetness of liberation. Islam in its social dynamic released these followers of the Torah from their bondage. In time, they would come to appreciate the Islamic divine reference provided they were not consumed by bigotry, self-centeredness, and the self-inflicted schism with the Muslims/gentiles around them. Freedom is a feature of the divine order, and these “aliens of history” should have been the first to have recognized this fact.

Before Islam, the Byzantines had ruled Egypt and the Mediterranean basin for centuries. The Egyptian Coptic Christians were for a considerable period of time dependents of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>396</sup> In that capacity, they were, more or less, a colonized people; and as it typically goes with such subdued people, they were lashed with the physical and political policies of the Byzantine Empire. Then came Islam. In an incident during the inaugural years of Islamic rule in Egypt, the son of the Arabian Islamic governor of Egypt happened to physically abuse a Copt's son. The Copts, who were second- and third-class Byzantine citizens for centuries, now under the freedom and dignity provided by Islamic governance and well aware that Islam does not tolerate the abuse of power, took this case of “physical abuse” all the way to the Islamic capital in Arabia to demand justice for one of their own. Despite the fact that for hundreds of years, they had endured the physical and political abuse of the Romans and Byzantines, when one Muslim touched one of theirs in a cruel and pejorative manner they knew enough to seek redress for this unjustified behavior from the highest Islamic authority at that time, in Arabia. The Coptic litigants traveled for about one month to Arabia to exact justice. They petitioned ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the Islamic head of state at that time, and their case was heard and adjudicated in their favor.<sup>397</sup>

The society of Egypt that for thousands of years withstood all types of psychological and physical abuse was almost instantly transformed when it sensed that Islam was something new, something else, and something suitable. Such a demonstration of freedom, when a whole population discovers that it now has access to justice regardless of race, religion, nationality, or class, has rarely occurred in all of human history. Hence, it should not come as a surprise that

the overwhelming majority of people in Egypt ultimately espoused Islam. Only Islam, in the span of a mere generation, can put an end to millennia of social injustice and produce lasting results.

- (7:138) And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea; and thereupon they came upon people who were devoted to the adulation of some idols of theirs. Said [the Children of Israel], “O Moses, set up for us a god even as they have gods!” He replied, “Verily, you are people without any awareness [of right and wrong]!”
- (7:139) “As for these here — verily, their way of life is bound to lead to destruction; and worthless is all that they have ever done!”
- (7:140) [And] he said, “Am I to seek for you a deity/authority other than Allah, although it is He who has favored you above all other people?”
- (7:141) And [he reminded them of this word of Allah], “Lo! We saved you from Pharaoh’s people who afflicted you with cruel suffering, slaying your sons in great numbers and sparing [only] your women — which was an awesome trial from your Sustainer.”
- (7:142) And [then] We appointed for Moses thirty nights [on Mt. Sinai]; and We added to them ten, whereby the term of forty nights set by his Sustainer was fulfilled. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, “You take my place among my people; and act righteously, and follow not the path of the spreaders of corruption.”
- (7:143) And when Moses came [to Mt. Sinai] at the time set by Us, and his Sustainer spoke to him, he said, “O my Sustainer! Show [Yourself] to me, so that I might behold You!” Said [Allah], “Never can you see Me. However, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then — only then — will you see Me.” And as soon as his Sustainer revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust; and Moses fell down in a swoon. And when he regained his composure, he said, “Limitless are You in Your

وَجَوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ  
 لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ  
 تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مَتَّبِعُوا مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَطُلُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ  
 ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغَيْكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ  
 ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَإِذْ أَبْحَيْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ  
 الْعَذَابِ يَقُولُونَ أَبْنَاءَ كُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَ كُمْ فِي ذَلِكُمْ  
 بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَوَعَدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً  
 وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ فِتْمَ مِيقَتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ مُوسَى  
 لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ أَخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ  
 ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ  
 إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَن نَرِنِي وَلَكِن أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ  
 فَسَوْفَ نَرِنِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى  
 صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ بُتُّ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
 ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَالَ يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَاتِي وَبِكَلِمِي فَخُذْ  
 مَا آتَيْنَاكَ وَكُن مِّنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَاحِ

مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخَذَهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَمَرَ  
 قَوْمَكَ يَاخُذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُوْرِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ  
 آيَاتِي الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلًّا  
 آيَةً لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا  
 وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا  
 وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ  
 حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾  
 وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ أَلْمَ  
 يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا  
 ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا  
 قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ  
 الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ بِئْسَمَا  
 خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي أَعَجِلْتُمْ أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاحَ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ  
 أَخِيهِ يُجْرَهُ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّفُونِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونِي  
 فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِي الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ  
 الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن  
 رَبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ  
 عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِهَا وَآمَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا  
 لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَن مُّوسَى الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابِحَ  
 وَفِي نُسُخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْتَدُّونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَأَخْبَارَ  
 مُّوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِّمِيقِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ  
 رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُم مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِنِّي أَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ  
 مِنَّا إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَاءُ أَنْتَ  
 وَلِيْنَا فَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ حَيُّ الْعَلِيمِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَاكْتُبْ لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ  
 الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدْنَا إِلَيْكَ قَالَ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِهِ  
 مَن أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ  
 وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ  
 الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ  
 وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ

لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحْرِمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبِيثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ  
وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ  
وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ قُلْ  
يَتَّيِّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۗ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ  
وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَمِن قَوْمِ مُوسَىٰ أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ  
بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا أُمَمًا  
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ ۚ أَنِ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ  
الْحَجَرَ ۗ فَانْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ۗ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ  
أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ۗ وَظَلَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَمَ ۗ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّ  
وَالسَّلْوَىٰ ۗ كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ ۗ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا  
وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَإِذ قِيلَ لَهُمُ اسْكُنُوا  
هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ  
وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ سَنَزِيدُ

الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ  
 الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا  
 كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ وَسَأَلَهُمُ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ  
 حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ  
 يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ  
 نَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعْبُدُونَ قَوْمًا  
 لَّهِ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا مَعْدَرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ  
 يَنْفِقُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ  
 السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابٍ بَئِيسٍ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾  
 فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَن مَّا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَإِذْ  
 تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لِيُبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَن يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ  
 الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾  
 وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُمَمًا مِّنْهُمْ الصَّالِحِينَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ  
 ذَلِكَ وَبَلَّوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ فَخَلَفَ  
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَىٰ وَيَقُولُونَ

سَيَغْفِرُ لَنَا وَإِنْ يَأْتِهِمْ عَرْضٌ مِّثْلَهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ ۗ أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ  
 الْكِتَابِ أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالِدَارُ الْأَخِرَةُ  
 خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَنْقُوتُ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَمْسِكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ  
 وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا لَا نَضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَإِذْ نُنَقِّنَا الْجَبَلَ  
 فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظُلَّةٌ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ  
 وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾

glory! Unto You do I turn in repentance; and I shall [always] be the first to commit to You!”

- (7:144) Said [Allah], “O Moses! Behold, I have raised you above all people by virtue of the messages I have entrusted to you, and by virtue of My speaking [to you]: hold fast, therefore, to what I have vouchsafed you, and be among the grateful!”
- (7:145) And We ordained for him in the tablets [of the Law] all manner of admonition, clearly spelling out everything. And [We said], “Hold fast to them with [all your] strength, and bid your people to hold fast to their most goodly rules.” I will show you the way the iniquitous shall go.
- (7:146) From My messages shall I cause to turn away all those who, without any right, behave haughtily on earth: for, though they may see every sign [of the truth-in-power], they do not commit to it, and though they may see the path of rectitude, they do not choose to follow it — whereas, if they see a path of error, they take it for their own: this, because



they have given the lie to Our messages, and have remained heedless of them.

- (7:147) Hence, all who give the lie to Our messages, and [thus] to the truth of the life to come, in vain shall be all their doings: [for] are they to be rewarded for anything but what they were wont to do?
- (7:148) And in his absence the people of Moses took to revering the effigy of a calf [made] of their ornaments, which gave forth a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them in any way? [And yet] they took to revering it, for they were evildoers:
- (7:149) Although [later], when they would smite their hands in remorse, having perceived that they had gone astray, they would say, “Indeed, unless our Sustainer has mercy on us and grants us forgiveness, we shall most certainly be among the lost!”
- (7:150) And when Moses returned to his people, full of wrath and sorrow, he exclaimed, “Vile is the course you have followed in my absence! Have you forsaken your Sustainer’s commandment?” And he threw down the tablets [of the Law], and seized his brother’s head, dragging him toward himself. Cried Aaron, “O my mother’s son! Behold, the people strong-armed me and almost slew me: so let not my enemies rejoice at my affliction, and count me not among the evildoing folk!”
- (7:151) Said [Moses], “O my Sustainer! Grant You forgiveness to me and my brother, and admit us into Your grace: for You are the most merciful of the merciful!”
- (7:152) [And to Aaron he said], “Verily, as for those who have taken to idolizing the [golden] calf, their Sustainer’s condemnation will overtake them, and ignominy [will be their lot] in the life of this world!” For thus do We requite all who invent [such] falsehood.
- (7:153) But as for those who do bad deeds and afterward repent and [truly] commit themselves [to Us] — verily, after such repentance your Sustainer is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace!

- (7:154) And when Moses' wrath was stilled, he took up the tablets, in the writing whereof there was guidance and grace for all who stood in awe of their Sustainer.
- (7:155) And Moses chose out of his people seventy men to come [and pray for forgiveness] at a time set by Us. Then, when violent trembling seized them, he prayed, "O my Sustainer! Had You so willed, You would have destroyed them before this, and me [with them]. Will You destroy us for what the weak-minded among us have done? [All] this is but a trial from You, whereby You allow to go astray whom You will, and guide aright whom You will. You are near to us: grant us, then, forgiveness and have mercy on us — for You are the best of all forgivers!
- (7:156) "And ordain You for us what is good in this world as well as in the life to come: behold, unto You have we turned in repentance!" [Allah] answered, "With My chastisement do I afflict whom I will, but My grace overspreads everything: and so I shall confer it on those who are conscious of Me and circulate the wealth [I have given them], and who commit themselves to Our messages —
- (7:157) "Those who shall follow the [last] Apostle, the unlettered Prophet whom they shall find described in the Torah that is with them, and [later on] in the Gospel, [the Prophet] who will put the self-evident truth into law and abolish the self-evident offense [from society], and make lawful to them the good things of life and forbid them the bad things, and lift from them their burdens and the shackles that were upon them [aforetime]. Those, therefore, who shall dedicate themselves to him, and honor him, and support him, and follow the light that has been bestowed from on high through him — it is they who shall be effective."
- (7:158) Say [O Muhammad], "O mankind! Verily, I am an apostle of Allah to all of you, [sent by Him] unto whom the dominion over the heavens and the earth belongs! There is no deity/authority save Him; He [alone] grants life and deals death!" Commit, then, to Allah and His Apostle — the un-

- lettered Prophet who is committed to Allah and His words — and follow him, so that you might find guidance!
- (7:159) And among the folk of Moses there have been people who would guide [others] in the way of the truth and act justly in its light.
  - (7:160) And We divided them into twelve tribes, [or] communities. And when his people asked Moses for water, We inspired him, “Strike the rock with your staff!” — whereupon twelve springs gushed forth from it, so that all the people knew whence to drink. And We caused the clouds to comfort them with their shade, and We sent down to them *manna* and quails, [saying], “Partake of the good things We have provided for you as sustenance.” And [by all their sinning] they did no harm unto Us — but [only] against their own selves did they sin.
  - (7:161) And [remember] when you were told, “Dwell in this land and eat of its food as you may desire; but say, ‘Remove from us the burden of our sins,’ and inaugurate your new society with humility — [whereupon] We shall forgive you your sins [and] shall amply reward the doers of good.”
  - (7:162) But those among them who were bent on wrongdoing substituted another saying for that which they had been given: and so We let loose against them a plague from heaven in requital of all their evil doings.
  - (7:163) And ask them about that town that stood by the sea: how its people would profane the Sabbath whenever their fish came to them, breaking the water’s surface, on a day on which they ought to have kept Sabbath — because they would not come to them on other than Sabbath-days! Thus did We try them by means of their [own] iniquitous doings.
  - (7:164) And whenever a caucus among them asked [those who tried to restrain the Sabbath-breakers], “Why do you preach to people whom Allah is about to destroy or [at least] to chastise with suffering severe?” — [the more conscientious ones would] answer, “In order to be free from blame

before your Sustainer, and that these [transgressors, too], might become conscious of Him.”

- (7:165) And thereupon, when those [sinners] had forgotten all they had been told to take to heart, We saved those who had tried to prevent the doing of evil, and overwhelmed those who had been bent on evildoing with dreadful suffering for all their iniquity;
- (7:166) And then, when they disdainfully persisted in doing what they had been forbidden to do, We said to them, “Be as apes despicable!”
- (7:167) And lo! your Sustainer made it known that most certainly He would cast against them, until Resurrection Day, people who would afflict them with cruel suffering: verily, your Sustainer is swift in retribution — yet, verily, He is [also] much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (7:168) And We dispersed them as [separate] communities all over the earth — some of them were righteous, and some of them less than that; and the latter We tried with blessings as well as with afflictions, so that they might mend their ways.
- (7:169) And they have been succeeded by [new] generations who — [in spite of] having inherited the divine writ — clutch but at the fleeting good of this lower world and say, “We shall be forgiven,” the while they are ready, if another such fleeting good should come their way, to clutch at it [and sin again]. Have they not been solemnly pledged through the divine writ not to attribute unto Allah anything but what is true, and [have they not] read again and again all that is therein? Since the life in the hereafter is the better [of the two] for all who are conscious of Allah — will you not, then, use your reason?
- (7:170) And as for those who hold fast to the divine writ and standardize the *ṣalāh* [in society], verily, We shall not fail to requite these [standard-bearers] who improve [their conditions]!
- (7:171) And [did We not say] when We caused the mountain [Mt. Sinai] to quake above the Children of Israel as

though it were a [mere] shadow, and they thought that it would fall upon them, “Hold fast with [all your] strength to what We have vouchsafed you, and bear in mind all that is therein, so that you might remain conscious of Allah [His power and authority]” (al-A'rāf:138–171).

In this *sūrah*, after recounting the exodus with the Children of Israel from Egypt across the Red Sea, the narrative describes Moses (ﷺ) rehabilitating the broken Israeli psychology. People who were born and raised into slavery for successive generations are not capable of miraculously honoring self-direction and freedom when they are thrust upon them all of a sudden. The many generations of the Israeli past unloaded their obscurantism upon Mūsá's generation. The message from God, it seems, was stuck in a quicksand of uncertainty and lack of self-respect. And thus Mūsá had to live through the social trauma of Israeli double-dealings, obfuscation, pigheadedness, and disingenuousness borne out of cumulative Israeli generations. These words of Allah (ﷻ) chronicle the burden Mūsá had to carry in this nearly impossible task, as the Israelis around him were overly impressed with whatever the earth had to offer and under-inspired by heaven. To them, a slavery that fetches bread was better than a prophet who promises Paradise.

The pertinent issue here is that these Israelis were not an exception to human nature. This “Israeli” behavior is to be expected in other societies — maybe not to the same extent — but still within the range of human proclivity and tendency. Under prolonged conditions and circumstances of entrenched oppression, what was originally a divine message for liberation and freedom can turn into a self-centered rhythm of rituals or laws without morals. To change a society from its well-entrenched status quo — tantamount to slavery — into a vibrant and independent society honoring the authority and power of Allah (ﷻ) alone will take a marathon spirit and a wellspring of unceasing fortitude, typically the qualities possessed by prophets. Muslims, by reading and rereading this Qur'an, are supposed to be the most conscious people in the world concerning the misbehavior of the Children of Israel. The

Qur'an brings their history into focus because the Muslims themselves, or any covenant-bearers for that matter, run the risk of repeating these exiling mistakes.

### The Israeli Antipathy for Tyranny Is Only Skin-Deep

And We had the Children of Israel traverse the sea; and thereupon they came upon people who were devoted to the adulation of some idols of theirs. Said [the Children of Israel], "O Moses, set up for us a god even as they have gods!" He replied, "Verily, you are people without any awareness [of right and wrong]! As for these here — verily, their way of life is bound to lead to destruction; and worthless is all they have ever done!" [And] he said, "Am I to seek for you a deity/authority other than Allah, although it is He who has favored you above all other people?" And [he reminded them of this word of Allah], "Lo! We saved you from Pharaoh's people who afflicted you with cruel suffering, slaying your sons in great numbers and sparing [only] your women — which was a stunning trial from your Sustainer" (7:138–141).

This footage concentrates on the Children of Israel after they had crossed over the Red Sea. Striking here is the intractable and dogged attitude of the people around Moses (ﷺ) — an obstreperous people who could not let go of their previously draconian history. Just yesterday, they were third-class citizens and slaves in pharaonic Egypt. It took a long struggle in the company of Moses to finally break loose from the Egyptian police state. Moses led them out of their social misery and historical dilemma in the name of Allah's authority and divinity. And in the process, their enemies, the Pharaoh along with his hierarchy and elite, were destroyed. The sea opened up and they walked into their land of freedom. Finally freedom! Or were they really free?

Escaping from that establishment and its system should have made the ungodly Egyptian religion a thing of the past. But once the Children of Israel crossed over the sea they encountered a God-denying society attending to its own idols and graven images. A discerning observer would think that they should have had enough of this type of false religion in Egypt. But here they are asking Moses (ﷺ), the messenger of the world's Sustainer, who delivered them from Egypt's false authority, false way of life, and false religion to authorize for them an idol that they could commence worshipping,

**And We had the Children of Israel cross the sea; and thereupon they came upon people who were devoted to the adulation of some idols of theirs. Said [the Children of Israel], “O Moses, set up for us a god as they have gods!” (7:138).**

This indicates that the Children of Israel had only crossed the sea out of Egypt physically, but their yearnings were still inside of Egypt. Therefore, even though such people were taken out of geographical tyranny, their fancies for tyranny's byproducts were not taken out of them. This surface break with tyranny never translated into a psychological break from tyranny's trappings. The psychology of these Israelis, so vividly demonstrated in this Qur'anic book of record, was faint and unreliable on many, if not most, occasions. Their antipathy for tyranny was not rooted in the depths of their hearts, meaning that they only felt the sting of oppression so long as it was applied to them, but had the same oppression been inflicted upon others, or worse, had they been the oppressors, they could not have cared less. They seemed to thrive on the border line between God-assertion and God-denial, with an itch to blur the line. For every step they would take into God-assertion, they would take two steps back into God-denial, the net result being the latter.

They showed little heart for Allah (ﷻ), wanting to identify the truth with profitability. Their love for God was as scarce as their invocation of His name. At long last, they were out of Egypt, but they could not leave behind what Egypt represented, hence

their desire to emulate the God-deniers they encountered on the other side of the Red Sea. The previous decades of struggle against God-deniers and idol worshipers in Egypt were summarily forgotten. They had the chutzpah to ask Moses (ﷺ) to denominate an idol for them. God's miracle of splitting the sea and destroying a government with its Pharaoh head of state, God's other miracles during a full generation of struggle within Egypt — all these did not register inside their feelings and spirits. How shameless they must have been to request a prophet of God, of all people, to assign them an idol. Had they themselves forged an idol without getting Moses (ﷺ) involved, then this perhaps would have been understandable, but to ask a prophet of *tawhīd* to violate his conscience, his responsibility, and his whole lifetime struggle necessitates a level of impudence that is unique only to Banū Isrā'īl.

Naturally, Mūsá (ﷺ) felt exasperated and stung by the impertinence of his people. How could a messenger from the God of the heavens and earth be called upon by the very same people he spent a virtual lifetime with to erect some type of idol for them — in total disregard of the true Lord, the true Sovereign, and the true God? In a state of passion and furor he replied, **“Indeed, you are people without any comprehension [of right and wrong]!”** These were people who had no appreciation for what is right, no grasp for the truth, and no perceptiveness of what is correct. These Israelis did not value their relationship with God, displaying unbelievable detachment from honoring the God who honored them. Only people of a relatively permanent disorder of thought can express such heresy to Allah's prophet; a mental deviation of this nature eventually disowns God as power and disavows Him as authority. These Israelis did not have the least bit of common sense, as a little reasoning would have been sufficient for them to withhold such blasphemous requests.

Israelis pride themselves on intellect and witticism, which is currently on display as they rationalize the colonization of the Holy Land and the ethnic cleansing of its indigenous inhabitants, the Palestinians. The solid lesson from their history is that they never marshaled such features to approach the God of life and existence



as much as they summoned their mentality and brainpower to break away from Him. Mūsá (ﷺ) nonetheless walked the distance of their “logic” with them, telling them to consider the fate of these people who are idol worshipers, the same ones the Israelis wanted to imitate, **“Indeed these [idol worshipers] are in a state of self-destruction, and invalid is everything they do.”**

The Children of Israel wanted a god on the order or in the image of the idols held in reverence by heretical people — despite the fact that such people are living a failing life, leading eventually to their destructive demise. People in this condition have many deities coupled with many authorities — a sure prescription for social disintegration and a foundering of purpose. They may also have their peculiar religious and military classes that thrive on this social and ideological deviation from God. The political and official classes of people, as is the case everywhere, are the frontline figures of this social disaster in the making. All societies that operate with multifaceted authorities and multiple deities are bound to meet the cataclysmic destiny accruing from generations of progressive deviation from Allah (ﷻ), the only true authority/deity for man.

In a state of resignation, Mūsá then appeared to intonate his voice, adding, **“Am I to seek for you a deity/authority other than Allah, although it is He who has favored you above all other people?”** Allah (ﷻ) favored these Children of Israel in the context of their time and generation. He chose them to be the bearers of scripture, the followers of prophets, and the carriers of the covenant. High, indeed, was the position they were tasked with. They were also selected to dwell in the Holy Land, which at the time was under the control of God-deniers. How, then, was it possible for these Israelis to approach Prophet Mūsá (ﷺ), asking him for the sort of a god akin to the gods of pagans? How could a people graced by God opt for a sub-god that equates with the gods of a sacrilegious society? But, then again, these are the life and times of Israelis.

Allah (ﷻ) goes on to remind these dour Israelis of His act of gracious kindness,

**Lo! We saved you from Pharaoh's intimates who afflicted you with cruel suffering, slaying your sons in great numbers and sparing [only] your women — which was an amazing trial from your Sustainer (7:141).**

Fresh out of oppression and slavery, which was still brisk in their minds, the Israelis would not possibly be getting away from its mental deficits in a short period of time. Their delivery in the Exodus should have been enough to make a people loyal to God until the end of life and the end of time. True, these Israelis were tried. But then Allah (ﷻ) was there when it mattered most. They suffered, but then they were delivered. They went through hard times, but then came times of comfort, “...which was an awe-inspiring trial from your Sustainer.”

Thinking minds would realize by now that all of what happened in Egypt and the Exodus was pre-calculated to offer these Israelis the opportunity to prove their mettle. None of these events and their particular timing were haphazard or coincidental. Peoples and societies will be put through the test of time. And only those who have a hearty, heartfelt, and whole-hearted relationship with Allah (ﷻ) will evolve out of this with His blessings, grace, and mercy.

This Qur’anic narrative, which has not been corrupted by the whims of kings or adulterated by the hierarchy of a religious class, represents the final and most accurate word on the behavior of the Israelis, their internal thoughts as a society, and their interaction with Mūsá (ﷺ). No Muslim doubts this fact. However, outside of the context of the Qur’an, there has been a proliferation of inaccurate and misleading information, and so this writer feels compelled to outline the event of the Exodus as it is generally understood among Judeo-Christian people, the objective being to filter these defective narratives through the Qur’anic scripture and winnow out whatever is incorrect.

The word *exodus* comes from the Greek word *exodos*, meaning *a way out*. As a proper noun, it refers to the departure of the Israelis from the eastern Egyptian Delta, after they had been divinely emancipated from shameful servitude to Pharaoh. Tenaciously ar-

ticulated by ancient biblical poetry (Exodus, 15:1–18) and the prose of early Israeli cultic credos (Deuteronomy, 6:20–24, 26:5–9; Joshua, 24:2–13), this formative moment became the cornerstone of Israel's faith. Perceiving that through the Exodus they had been marvelously borne “on eagles' wings” (Exodus, 19:4), the Israelis recognized they had been uniquely summoned as God's people.<sup>398</sup>

Historically, the Exodus was not experienced by all the ancestors of later Israel. Theologically, it did involve all of them as participants in a constitutive event that significantly defined Israeli existence. As cultic legend, the Exodus narrative (Chapters 1–15) was intimately linked with Israel's Passover festival. Consequently, subsequent Israeli generations could feel the pain of Egyptian oppression and exult in God's unlimited sovereignty that made deliverance possible. Though biblical testimony to the Exodus is striking, it is nowhere attested in extant Egyptian literature. Pharaohs tended not to record defeat. Moreover, in Egyptian eyes, this was surely dismissed as a minor clash involving the border escape of a few foreign slaves. The role of Moses (ⲙⲟⲩⲥ) is doubtlessly exaggerated in the Book of Exodus, and no Egyptian pharaoh is ever named.<sup>399</sup>

Dating evidence for the Exodus is tenuous. Mention in the Book of 1 Kings (6:1) that 480 years had passed between the Exodus and Solomon's fourth regnal year (about 958BCE) places the Israeli escape in the 15th century BCE, a date often discounted as too early. While archaeological data have not evoked uniform interpretation, arguments for a pre-13th-century Exodus appear strained. Tentative correlation of the biblical account of the conquest with numerous city destructions marking Canaan's transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age (near 1200BCE) suggests that Ramses II (ruled circa 1290–1224BCE) was the pharaoh of the Exodus. His father, Seti I (ruled circa 1305–1290BCE), is understood as the pharaoh whose emergence and death is reported in the Book of Exodus (1:8 and 2:23 respectively).<sup>400</sup>

Mention of Israeli labor at the Egyptian store-cities, Pithom (Tell er-Retabeh) and Raamses (Avaris), in the Book of Exodus (1:11) coordinates with extra-biblical narratives that these strong

Nineteenth Dynasty pharaohs sponsored rigorous building programs there. Formerly the Hyksos capital, Avaris was preoccupied by the Egyptian court and predesignated the “House of Ramses.” Many Semites were living in the vicinity. If the Israel that Pharaoh Marniptah (ruled circa 1224–1211 BCE) claims to have conquered, in a stela commemorating his Palestinian campaign, was part of the “mixed multitude” (Exodus, 12:38) that had fled under Moses (摩西), Ramses’ identity as pharaoh of the Exodus would be compelling. But Marniptah might have battled another tribe by that name, which had never left Canaan. Hence, the exit of a few thousand Semitic slaves well into the reign of Ramses II presents itself as reasonable conjecture, not dogma.<sup>401</sup>

Since the biblical sites mentioned usually defy confident identification, the specific geography of Israel’s Egyptian departure and wilderness wandering remains mostly unknown. That Israel’s rescue from water lying ahead and advancing Egyptians behind did not transpire at the Red Sea is a matter of differing interpretations; as one interpretation from the Hebrew text (Exodus, 15:4) is understood by some to mean “sea of weeds” (*yam-suph*). Thus, the body of water at issue was presumably a southern extension of Lake Menzaleh in the eastern Nile Delta with its papyrus marshes (near modern al-Qanṭaraḥ on the Suez Canal). Having escaped by God’s overpowering of the sea (Exodus, 14:16), the Israelis journeyed southeastward by way of Succoth to Mt. Sinai near the southern apex of the Sinai Peninsula. Though other locations for this mountain (also called Horeb) have been proposed, this traditional locus accords with the notation (Deuteronomy, 1:2) that Sinai was an 11-day journey from Kadesh-barnea, an impressive oasis some 50 miles south of Beersheba.<sup>402</sup>

Leaving Mt. Sinai (Numbers, 10:11–12), they advanced northward into the Wilderness of Paran and thence to the Kadesh oasis for a lengthy encampment. Failing to penetrate Canaan from the south (Numbers, 13:1–14:45), the Israelis departed from Kadesh (Numbers, 20:22) to experience a trying detour through Transjordan. Ultimately poised in the Moab plain, they were ready to infiltrate the Land of Promise from an easterly direction (Numbers,

36:13).<sup>403</sup> The Judeo-Christian biblical narrative appears to be more concerned with chronology, places, and mechanical movements than with the human behavior of the Israelis, which is what the Qur'an concentrates on.

### Moses' Meeting with the Almighty

In the next installment of the long and tortuous Israeli history with Mūsá, the latter is seen preparing himself for an encounter with Allah (ﷻ). As befits a man about to “converge” with Allah, the human nature in Mūsá was in its highest state of watchfulness and sensitivity. It would take Mūsá 40 nights to prepare for his meeting with the Almighty,

**And [then] We appointed for Moses thirty nights [on Mt. Sinai]; and We added to them ten, whereby the term of forty nights set by his Sustainer was fulfilled (7:142).**

The first task Mūsá (ﷻ) had set out to accomplish — the Exodus and delivery of the Children of Israel from the tyranny of Egypt — was now completed. No longer were they subject to the despotism of Pharaoh. Their previous years and probably centuries of slavery and ethnic discrimination were now all behind them. They would henceforth be free to roam in the open land, albeit a somewhat harsh and arid area of the world. They were on their way to the Holy Land. It appears, though, that these Israelis were not up to this task. They began to show symptoms of their inability to become God's attendants on earth. *Āyah* 7:138 above recounts them wanting to simulate people who had idols and material objects as their gods. Their devotion to the One God of Moses who saw them through their most difficult times and liberated them from secular slavery was in question.

This meant that these people were in need of direct and precise instruction on how to proceed forward if they were to become a light unto mankind. Apparently, it was for this reason that Moses (ﷻ) was setting out to encounter the Almighty. And so,

Moses himself had to prepare his mind and soul for this approaching meeting with Allah (ﷻ). The preparation period designated by Allah was 30 nights, to which He added 10 more — all in all, 40 nights. During this time period, Mūsá was diminishing his daily and earthly involvement as he readied himself for that unique detection of the majesty of Allah. In this context, some *tafsīr* references say that Allah ordered Mūsá to fast during this preparatory time.<sup>404</sup>

No doubt, this was going to be a moving meeting with the All-Gracious and the Almighty. Mūsá’s momentum and willpower were being set up for a rare moment in human history. But before he left his people, who were prone to be unruly and rambunctious, he was careful to leave them under the watchful eye of his brother Hārūn (ﷺ), whom he counseled, **“You take my place among my people; and behave appropriately, and do not follow the course of the troublemakers.”** Mūsá knew that his brother, like himself, was a prophet who was also empowered by the Almighty to say and do His will. And it does no harm to part company with good advice, even if these others are people of merit and virtue. Mūsá had realized how critical and demanding this whole issue was; he was also well acquainted with the Israeli attitude and tendencies. Hārūn was receptive to the words of Mūsá: he did not think that his brother was impinging on him, he did not believe that Mūsá was less confident in him, and he did not feel insulted. This is how mature people behave when they hear advice.

In forming an opinion of what Moses said to his older brother Aaron (ﷺ), the *āyāt* help the reader fill in the blanks. Moses was advising his brother to “fill in” for him with regard to the Children of Israel, to make sure they remain vigilant in their godly duties, and, regardless of the circumstances, to not be swayed away from God and His instructions. This, of course, was nothing new to Hārūn, as he himself was a prophet — but, because the Israelis were shifty and tricky, a reminder was in order. From the overall picture in the Qur’an, Hārūn was Mūsá’s “right-hand man,”

**And appoint for me, out of my kinfolk, one who will help me to bear my burden: Aaron, my brother. Add**

**You through him to my strength, and let him share my task... (20:29–32).**

Even so, it was well known that Mūsá was the undisputed leader, the man in charge.

There is no parallel in human history to Mūsá's presence at that extraordinary rendezvous, when the Deity was literally speaking to a comparably powerless representative of an insignificant humanity. This circumstance when "God meets man" can generate philosophical and theological differences of opinion, disagreements in details, arguments, and potential accusations and divisions. Nevertheless, this event — all details aside — did happen. The human mind and human nature, being what they are, would like to know how "infinity" meets the finite, how God speaks to man. No ordinary human being can, with any degree of certainty, characterize the specifics or particulars of how this actually took place. Simply stated, people, even extraordinarily intelligent people — in the absence of direct and explicit information from Allah (ﷻ) such as the *āyāt* of the Qur'an — do not have the capacity to describe how God "verbalized" a human language, or how His words became the language that Mūsá (ﷺ) understood. Similarly how Mūsá heard or perceived of Allah's words, or which of his senses were involved cannot be known at a level where man's experience can be leveraged to reach an understanding. A profound grasp on how this exactly took place appears to be beyond human comprehension. People can only speak of communication, language, voice, sounds, perception, and decoding within the range of human senses and experience they all share. But to cast Allah's communication with Mūsá into an established set of understandings may or may not be correct. So, in the broad sense, what is known, per certainty, is that Allah spoke to Mūsá. How that happened in a tangible and "material" sense will probably never be known. Hence, all we have at our disposal is the Qur'anic description of this event,

**And when Mūsá came [to Mt. Sinai] at the time set by Us, and his Sustainer spoke to him, he said, "O my**

Sustainer! Show [Yourself] to me, so that I might behold You!” Said [Allah], “Never can you see Me. However, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then — only then — will you see Me. And as soon as his Sustainer revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust; and Mūsá fell down in a swoon. And when he came back to his senses, he said, “Limitless are You in Your glory! Unto You do I turn in repentance; and I shall [always] be the first to commit to You!”

Said [Allah], “O Mūsá! Behold, I have raised you above all people by virtue of the messages I have entrusted to you, and by virtue of My speaking [to you]: hold fast, therefore, to what I have vouchsafed you, and be among the grateful!” And We ordained for him in the tablets [of the Law] all manner of admonition, clearly spelling out everything. And [We said], “Hold fast to them with [all your] strength, and bid your people to hold fast to their most goodly rules.” I will show you the way the iniquitous shall go.

From My messages [of power demonstrations] shall I cause to turn away all those who, without any right, behave haughtily on earth: for, though they may see every sign [of the truth-in-power], they do not commit to it, and though they may see the path of rectitude, they do not choose to follow it — whereas, if they see a path of error, they take it for their own: this, because they have given the lie to Our messages [of power], and have remained heedless of them. Hence, all who give the lie to Our messages [of power], and [thus] to the truth of the life to come — in vain shall be all their doings: [for] are they to be rewarded for anything but what they were wont to do?” (7:143–147).

This is a scene that recaptures this past. It engages the human mind, nerves, and imagination, “And when Mūsá came [to Mt.



Sinai] at the time set by Us, and his Sustainer spoke to him, he [Mūsá] said, ‘O my Sustainer! Show [Yourself] to me..’” Today and yesterday, all humanity other than Mūsá was not present at that event, and hence, people can only try to imagine what happened there. When Mūsá (ﷺ) heard or perceived Allah’s words, his soul and self must have been elated. He may even have felt in a very undefined way “outside of himself.” This unique and transcendent moment may have prompted him to ask what no other person may reasonably ask, or what may never occur to a person to ask. In this overwhelming moment of bliss, while in the presence of an ecstatic eminence, Mūsá asked, with a fondness and longing for the Almighty, to see Him, “He [Mūsá] said, ‘My Sustainer! Have me see You.’” Allah (ﷻ) responded in a mild and gentle manner so as to put Mūsá at ease, “You will not [be able to] see Me. Rather, watch the mountain; and if it stays as it is you will [be able to] see Me.”

A mountain, of course, is stable and unmovable. It is also a physical mass — a natural elevation of the earth’s surface rising more or less abruptly to a summit, and attaining considerable altitude — that is unlike an emotional human. And so what happened? “And as soon as his Sustainer revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust.” But how did Allah (ﷻ) manifest Himself to that mountain? Unfortunately, however, there are no details of the event, nor any refined information, nor a photograph that could provide an answer to this question. The only access one could have to that event are the descriptive words that come from Allah in this unrivaled Qur’an. As one internalizes the meanings of these words through a transparent relationship with Allah, he might get a “sense” of what occurred. Every attempt at quantifying, sensorily representing, or “materializing” this event will only lead to never-ending arguments and counterarguments. There is just not enough authentic information to reconstruct this event in its human senses synopsis. The words of the Qur’an inspire the general meaning necessary for people to understand what happened, “And when his Sustainer divulged Himself to the mountain He reduced it to gritstone.”

The whole mountain was compacted and leveled with the earth. Mūsá (ﷺ) was overwhelmed with what he saw. His human nature could not absorb the magnitude of this extraordinary and inordinate event, **“And Mūsá fell down, traumatized.”** He lost consciousness for an interval, but when he regained control of his senses and realized he had asked too much of his Lord, he said, **“Limitless are You in Your glory.”** That is, Allah (ﷻ) is more than anyone could see with his mortal eyes and diminishing senses. And thus, when he said, **“To You I turn in repentance...,”** Mūsá realized he had gone too far in asking Allah to reveal Himself so that He could be perceived by a mere mortal. This discloses the understanding that prophets are the first to value the glory and majesty of Allah. Allah’s revealed word suffices, **“...and I shall [always] be the first to commit to You!”**

Once again, Mūsá (ﷺ) was rescued by Allah’s mercy. On this occasion, he was specifically picked out by the Almighty for showing the Children of Israel the way forward, to wit the illustrious tablets,

**Said [Allah], “O Moses! Behold, I have choice-selected you above all people by virtue of the [power] messages I have entrusted to you, and by virtue of My speaking [to you]: hold fast, therefore, to what I have given you, and be among the grateful!” (7:144).**

The divine words, **“Behold, I have choice-selected you above all people by virtue of the [power] messages I have entrusted to you...”** apply to the dynamic of time and place Mūsá (ﷺ) was in. Nonetheless, Mūsá was unique insofar as Allah (ﷻ) speaking to him. All these privileges correspond to responsibilities that were now Mūsá’s future and current task. Mūsá, like all other prophets, was the pacesetter for his people and society. Now the *āyāt* move on to the contents of the communication that occurred on the mountain, and how Mūsá received it, **“And We ordained for him in the tablets [of the Law] all manner of admonition, clearly spelling out everything.”**

Regrettably, what is found in many of the books of *tafsir* is an array of narratives and explanations that can be traced back to Judeo-Christian sources. The Judeo-Christian account of this event is known as the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. For the sake of clearing the air, a brief overview of the Judeo-Christian account of this incident will be presented below, but every reader is cautioned against taking seriously any of the following details that are irreconcilable with the Qur'anic final word on this matter. The observer will be able to tell the close to accurate information therein as well as the absurd by referencing every account to the most reliable information in the Qur'an.

The Ten Commandments are the summary of the agreement between God and the Jewish people, known in Hebrew as the *ten words* or *ten statements*. In only slightly differing versions in the Books of Exodus (Chapter 20) and Deuteronomy (Chapter 5), the laws were first stated directly and orally by God to the people in the desert. First God was identified as the author when He stated, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus, 20:2). Later Moses (ﷺ) is made the go-between on Mt. Sinai to receive the Decalogue in its written form. The Book of Exodus (32:15–16) makes it clear that God had shaped and inscribed the two tablets on which the commandments were written. After 40 days in the presence of God, Moses descended the mountain, presumed to be Mt. Sinai in the Sinai Peninsula. Finding the people had deserted both him and God for a golden calf, he dashed the tablets to pieces.<sup>405</sup>

Later, God ordered Moses (ﷺ) to go back up the mountain, bringing blank tablets on which God once again inscribed the "ten words." This time Moses successfully delivered them to the people. The stone tablets were then safeguarded within the Ark of the Covenant (Deuteronomy, 10:1–5). The Book of 1 Kings (8:9) states that the Ark's sole purpose was to house these two tablets of the Laws. The oldest Jewish tradition is that God engraved the commandments on the stone, and that Moses was merely the courier. On the other hand, a second tradition makes Moses the scribe (Exodus, 34:27–28).<sup>406</sup>

Scripture itself gives no clue for how to divide or number the commandments. Generally they are thought of as falling into two categories: those relating to one's relationship with God and those to one's relationship with his neighbor. Jesus (✠) also divided them into these two groups. Traditionally the Jews generally counted the statement, "I am the Lord your God" as the First Commandment. Most later practices count this statement rather as an introduction.<sup>407</sup>

Since the time of St. Augustine (354–430CE), the Western church has placed three commandments in the first category and seven in the second, not counting the commandment about graven images as a separate one and splitting out the final commandment(s) on coveting as nine and ten. This is still the practice of the Roman Catholics and Lutherans. The Jews, Greek Orthodox, Anglican, and Reformed churches generally make the commandment about images a separate one. Except for the Jews, they place four commandments in the first category and six in the second. Since the time of the Reformation the numbering has been very confused. From a Jewish interpretation, the commandment to honor one's parents is a religious obligation one really owes to God, not merely to one's parents, and this places it logically in the first table. Thus under the Jewish system there are five commandments in each category.<sup>408</sup>

Many scholars believe that the original form of the commandments, in whatever language God gave them, was a strong negative followed by a verb. Such a form in English lives on in "Don't kill," "Don't steal," and "Don't covet." The first of the commandments dealt with problems the Hebrews faced in Egypt and among the Canaanite tribes in the desert: worshiping many gods other than the One God, worshiping those gods in the form of idols, misusing the name of God, and honoring the revering of God's name in worship and obedience. Whether the commandment to honor one's parents belongs to the first category or the second will probably never be resolved, but the role of the parents as one's first influence in life, almost godlike, does make it a good transition between the commandments that deal with God and those that deal with one's

neighbor. The commandment against killing is primary to humanity's ability to live in community with others. Apparently the Books of Deuteronomy (19:1–12) and Numbers (35:1–16) allow for killing in times of war and for capital punishment. The commandment on adultery protects the integrity of the family, and in fact makes adultery a capital offense (Deuteronomy, 22:22–27). Stealing likewise was a serious offense in a society of wandering shepherds, often away from their families, tents, and animals. Testifying falsely before a court, lying about or ruining the reputation of one's neighbor, was also a serious matter, and the establishment of a court and judicial system at Kadesh about the same time as the giving of the Decalogue emphasizes the importance of legal testimony and the wrongness of perjury. The last commandment(s) had to do with coveting. As in contemporary Arabic, the *house* included everything that belonged to the house — wives, servants, flocks, household goods.<sup>409</sup>

The spectacular theophany (manifestation or appearance of God to a person) of God to Moses (ﷺ) and to the people of Israel, both before and after the giving of the Decalogue, helped establish its importance in the Covenant relationship. The Book of Exodus reports that the people trembled when they saw the mountain smoking and the lightning flashing, or when they heard the sound of thunder and blasts of the trumpets. They begged Moses (ﷺ) to ask God not to speak to them in person but instead that he act as God's spokesman.<sup>410</sup>

After the account of the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai in the biblical record come chapter after chapter of the detailed code of conduct, which the Ten Commandments had merely summarized. Taking up a great portion of the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses (ﷺ), these detailed laws about the building of the tabernacle, about sacrifices, about farming, and about dealing with one's neighbor differ from other social codes of the Middle East only in degree. In general, the Ten Commandments in the Book of Exodus are only loosely connected historically with the setting of the text. Their repetition in Deuteronomy appears to be a teaching tool for the training of priests. Psalm 81 is probably a hymn extolling the giving of the commandments and the making of the covenant.<sup>411</sup>

Physically, the tablets of the Law followed the people of Israel wherever they wandered. The Ark of the Covenant seems to have belonged most closely to the tribe of Ephraim, and soon became an object of reverence, even of worship, as the dwelling place of God. Even when captured by the Philistines, however, or later kept safely hidden at Kiriath-Jearim because David (☩) had not yet been able to subdue Jerusalem, it was still an object of great importance. According to one Talmudic legend, the Ark contained not merely the two tablets of the Law but also the fragments of the two others that Moses (☩) had smashed. When Jesus (☩) makes reference to “the commandments” in the New Testament (for example, Mark, 10:19), he does so without the phrase “the ten commandments.” In any case, the commandments sum up the relationships between a loving God and what God expects of loving people.<sup>412</sup>

### The Purpose of God’s Commandments

The moral lesson here does not concern the squeaky details of a religious class of people gone wrong; rather, **“And [We said], ‘Hold fast to them [the commandments] with [all your] strength, and bid your people to hold fast to their most goodly rules.’”** These commandments are not to be taken lightly, because God is not a joke. They are serious guidelines for the well-being of individual and social man. Inasmuch as the Israelis had just come out of generational slavery, their behavior had to be alerted with exceedingly strong words to be very assiduous, ardent, and reflective about these laws. This applies across the board to all peoples who are tasked with bringing about peace on earth and its precursor: universal justice.

However, this does not mean that subjects of the Almighty are expected to become fanatics, bigots, and a race of religious egos. Nowhere in God’s scriptures and revelations is there any hint of zealotry, prejudice, or racism. Allah’s work requires determined, dignified, fervent, and momentous work to explain His guidance to the primitive and the sophisticated, to the ignorant and the versed, and to one’s own people and “others.” The fraying social attitude of the Israeli people who had just broken out of Egyptian slavery

needed these guidelines. Most of the advice to these Israelis was cast in such a tone. They had to learn how to be serious but not extreme, how to be firm but not wild, and how to be thoughtful, but not idiotic or maniacal.

There is an underlying propensity in human nature to act “Israeli.” People who have been enslaved and denied their God-given freedoms for a long time will have a tendency to “break away from God” when He grants them freedom. Systemic violence, police states, and well-entrenched tyrannical governments can do this to people. Such victims come out of that experience with injured pride, broken hearts, and an inferiority complex. They are in no shape to assume command and control of front-line positions on the human horizon, leading mankind in the direction of a sovereign God and an authoritative Deity.

The populations of the world today have been enslaved with a culture of materialism, a worldwide social trend of consumerism, and a dream for becoming millionaires and big businessmen. This “mind control” and social engineering into voluntary enslavement makes them shudder when they hear the word *ideology* or *dīn* as defined by scripture. When people become sheeple, they shy away from God-given responsibilities because they are too feeble in spirit to move forward with them.

**“I will show you the way the iniquitous shall go...” or “I shall show you the territorial dominion of degenerates (*fāsiqs*).”** People who live at the scriptural level with their scriptural standard can easily discern how other colonies live in man-made systems, ruled by man-made laws, and led to an unbecoming end as a result of man’s own decision to exclude God from His “input” into their solitary and social lives. People who live by the Book of Allah can easily identify the areas of the world that are doomed because of their break with Allah (ﷻ). This was true during the time of Mūsá (ﷺ) and it has been true in all the times since.

Though the Israelis had just come out of slavery, they were not truly independent. They were on their way to the Holy Land but they were not qualified, yet, to be its administrators and liberators. Later on in the lifetime of Mūsá (ﷺ) when, on instructions from

Allah (ﷻ), he told them to enter into the occupied Holy Land, they said they would do no such thing because; in their own reckoning of the worldly odds, their enemy's firepower and military might was much greater than theirs,

**O Mūsá! In it [the Holy Land] there dwells a super-power — people of immense striking power — and we will not enter that land until they exit from it, and when they do we will enter it (5:22).**

And when two free souls within Israeli society urged their own people to obey Moses and make an effort to enter the Holy Land, the Israelis rebuked and berated the two, while saying to Moses,

**We will never enter it [the Holy Land] as long as those people [of vicious power] live there. Go you [Moses] and your Sustainer and do the fighting, for we will remain stationary (5:24).**

This speaks volumes about the toned-down and faint-hearted nature of these Children of Israel. This is why they needed to hear these words, **“Hold fast, therefore, to what I have revealed to you, and be among the grateful.”**

The end of this lesson deals with the “high and mighty” on earth who, without any scriptural guidance, have no moral basis for what they do,

**From My messages shall I cause to turn away all those who, without any right, behave imperiously on earth: for, though they may see every sign [of truth-in-power], they do not commit to it, and though they may see the path of rectitude, they do not choose to follow it — whereas, if they see a path of error, they take it for their own: this, because they have given the lie to Our messages [of power], and have remained heedless of them. Hence, all who give the lie to Our messages**



**[of power], and [thus] to the truth of the life to come — in vain shall be all their doings: [for] are they to be rewarded for anything but what they were wont to do? (7:146–147).**

Minds suffering from slave conditions read this *āyah* and understand it in reference to individuals, when in fact it includes institutions, organizations, governments, alliances, and any amassing of power that exudes imperialism.

This *āyah* discloses a social law that never fails. Superpowers, colonial powers, imperial powers, and the like are, due to the forces of their own dynamics, impervious to God's guidance. Prophets and people of conscience can speak to them night and day, they can bring them the quotes from God, word by word, they can perform miracles, and they can do whatever else necessary for these social structures to adjust to God's norms and ways, but in the end, such power structures will not grasp the wise counsel given them.

The Pharaoh did not have any consideration for what Mūsá (ﷺ) was saying. And his empire went down the drain. In today's world, the American empire is also deaf to scripture and to God. Even when its own people try to talk it back to a straight path, it refuses to listen. In the flush of victory some warned against the course on which America was embarking. From President Grover Cleveland to House Speaker Thomas B. Reed, from labor statesman Samuel Gompers to industrialist Andrew Carnegie, they implored the American Republic to resist the temptation. "The fruits of imperialism, be they bitter or sweet," declared William Jennings Bryan, "must be left to the subjects of monarchy. This is one tree of which citizens of a republic may not partake. It is the voice of the serpent, not the voice of God, that bids us to eat."<sup>413</sup> To annex foreign peoples without their consent, said Massachusetts Senator George Hoar, contradicted the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence,

The [American] founding fathers would not believe that their heirs would be beguiled from these sacred and awful verities that they might strut about in the cast-off clothing

of pinchbeck emperors and pewter kings; that their descendants would be excited by the smell of gunpowder and the sound of the guns of a single victory as a small boy by a firecracker on some Fourth of July morning.<sup>414</sup>

An Anti-Imperialist League was founded in September of 1898. “The serious question for the people of this country to consider,” said Frederick Gookin, “is what effect the imperial policy will have upon ourselves if we permit it to be established.”<sup>415</sup>

“We cannot maintain an empire in the Orient and maintain a republic in America,” said Mark Twain.<sup>416</sup> “What do the people get out of this war?” asked the American Senator Tom Watson of Georgia. “The fighting and the taxes... What are we going to get out of this war as a nation? Endless trouble, complications, expense. Republics cannot go into the conquering business and remain republics.”<sup>417</sup> William Graham Sumner gave a speech he titled “The Conquest of the United States by Spain.” In it he said,

...[W]e are submitting to be conquered by her on the field of ideas and policies... If we believe in liberty, as an American principle, why do we not stand by it? Why are we going to throw it away and enter upon a Spanish policy of dominion and regulation?<sup>418</sup>

At the opening of the 20th century there were five wide-ranging Western empires — the British, French, Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian — and two emerging future powers — Japan and the United States of America. By century’s end, all the empires had disappeared. How did they perish? By war — all of them. And what leads to war? The disregard for the power of Allah (ﷻ). And what makes rulers disregard God’s power? Their disregard for scripture. And when God in their high offices is not an authority or a power, then history unfolds as it did in the last European century.

The Austro-Hungarian empire was crushed in WWI and torn to pieces at Versailles, where Germany was also dismembered. A vengeful Reich then began a second European war (WWII). Ruin

was total. Japan, believing its empire was being extorted, its place in the sun denied, attacked America and was smashed like no other nation in history. The British and French empires, already bled in the trenches of the Western Front from August 1914 to November 1918, did not long survive Hitler's war.

Russia's empire, dismantled by the kaiser in 1918, was restored by Lenin's Bolsheviks. Driven by traditional Russian imperialism and a new fighting faith, communism, the Soviet empire expanded until its reach was global. Overextended, bankrupt, exhausted by a 50-year struggle against the US, and bled by the West that far surpassed the communist bloc in economic power and technological prowess, it collapsed after a crisis of faith and a loss of will to maintain its rule over subject peoples who had grown to hate it.

America nowadays is perishing along the same historical imperial path. It prides itself on a diminishing superpower status. For a while, it managed to stay out of major imperial enterprises around the globe. After WWII, the behemoth American imperialist military industrial and banking complex's foray into Korea and Vietnam were the appetizers for a main course that would come some years later. Nowadays, the imperialist US government has launched what it calls a war against international terrorism that may last, as American officials themselves say, for over a century. America's leaders are beginning to reenact every folly that brought great powers to ruin — from arrogance and hubris, to assertions of global hegemony, to imperial overstretch, to trumpeting new "crusades," to handing out war guarantees to regions and countries where Americans have never fought before. The military creep that is beginning to devour the constitutional basis of America and the corporate and financial interests that are involved are quickly piling up the kind of commitments that produced the greatest disasters of the 20th century.

Without God and scripture the United States imperial government is sinking into wars of aggression and occupation in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. The fear is that with this Godless strategy the American decision makers may widen their global warfare to include other areas of the southern hemisphere or the

Muslim regions of the world. With this type of bloody and careening momentum the preaching of God's word falls on deaf bureaucratic and dogmatic ears,

**I will “turn off” from My message [of power] all those who conduct themselves with [policies of] imperium on earth, having no justification [for that] (7:146).**

The worst and unredeemable part of it is that the power-obsessed in government, military, and finances spent generations and budgets to de-authorize God Himself. In the process they subjected their populations to temporal powers and authorities. This is yet another form of slavery. Such a perceptual aberration explains the following divine words,

**...for, though, they may see every sign [of the truth-in-power], they do not commit to it, and though they may see the path of rectitude, they do not choose to follow it (7:146).**

The people, the masses are in a state of automatic *kufir*. Their pharaonic gods have them on cruise control toward a self-destructive end.

In a world that has no God as authority, anything may appear to be right, and any other thing may appear to be wrong. As the definitions no longer come from Allah (ﷻ), they are easily contrived, marketed, and then taught everywhere in public life, **“This is because they [the Pharaoh and his elites] have given the lie to Our [power] messages, and have remained heedless of them.”**

This is yet another *sunnah* (social law) that has to be understood by conscientious and committed Muslims. Allah (ﷻ) diverts away from His power manifestations and efficacy demonstrations all elites and individuals who are domineering and imperious. Blinded by their trivial worldly power, these narrow-minded and disdainful types cannot yield to the Almighty even if they are presented with miracles and supernatural feats, **“And so, when they**

**swerved from the precise course [that leads to Allah] Allah let their hearts swerve from the truth” (61:5).**

This social law applies to individuals as well as to their societies. In this case it was Pharaoh and his official upper class who could not see the truth in all that Mūsá (ﷺ) demonstrated of the power of Allah (ﷻ). There are instances in which some portion of public opinion may for a moment realize that God is demonstrating His power and authority, but that “moment of truth” is swamped by their pomposity; Pharaoh’s people displayed such behavior, **“And in their contemptibility and self-exaltation they rejected them [Allah’s demonstrations of power], although their minds were convinced of their truth...” (27:14).** This distinct phase in the “cycle of *da’wah*” is to be seen in practically all prophetic missions. It was also observed in the attitude and reactions of Quraysh whose boastfulness and contempt diverted it from acquiescing to the truth presented by Muhammad (ﷺ).

There is a destructive downside to the attitude of those who wield earthly power: they do not think much of so-called pedestrian or mediocre individuals. So when a “poor” prophet comes with Allah’s message they display a reflexive attitude of arrogance and lordliness. In other words, they do not have the receptive facility to accept what is coming to them from heaven. These high-handed and self-assertive types have gone through a reverse psychology that inclines them away from God, scripture, and prophet,

**Verily, they against whom your Sustainer’s word [of judgement] has come true will not commit themselves [to Allah] — even though every sign [of the truth-in-power] should come to their awareness — until they behold the grievous suffering [that awaits them in the life to come] (10:96–97).**

The “finding” here is that these types of arrogant individuals or even societies were not created by Allah to be hopelessly self-possessed and inescapably doomed. They, themselves, acquired and abided by a life-long attitude of pushy self-centeredness. Allah

never forced them to be arrogant or pigheaded. The truth is that they of their own will and choosing became bumptious and egotistic. This caused them to disparage God's message and His prophet's mission. They "licensed" themselves to do whatever they wanted — legally and morally. And as there appeared to be no obstacle in their way they shunted their lives away from Allah (ﷻ). And this is how they oriented themselves to self-destruct,

**And most certainly have We destined for Hell many of the jinn and men who have hearts with which they fail to grasp the truth, and eyes with which they fail to see, and ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle — nay, they are even less conscious of the right way: it is they, they who are the [truly] heedless! (7:179).**

In the present, the serious deniers of God's power appear to be in their prime. They are modern, they are industrialized, and they have all the attending military might. To some uninformed and unscriptured people the status of such presumptuous people is exhilarating and fascinating. The former think that there has to be something creditable and glorious about the latter. But from the understanding of this Book, anyone — individual or nation — who takes issue with Allah (ﷻ), His power, the final life, and contravenes the prophets — whomever they are — will amount to nothing. They were and are a complete failure.

Allah (ﷻ) demonstrates His power within the human body, inside the dynamics of life, within the kinetics of nature, throughout the distances of the universe. Allah also expresses His power through the lifetimes and life-struggles of His prophets and messengers (ﷺ). With all these divine power expressions all around, any human mind or human system that disputes or negates this overwhelming power presence of Allah is defunct and doomed. Any human mind or social structure in such contradiction with Allah, the Creator and the Almighty, is but a toxic mutation and a deadly aberration of the way Allah created existence and organized life

itself. There is no affinity between Allah's will as it takes its merciful course in all manifestations of life and these anemic individuals and malignant establishments that temporarily occupy a position of apparent power in this world. Therefore, all their schemes and strategies will eventually waste away or die out. When they cut themselves off from Allah, they will perish — sooner or later.

Those who cannot see the solid “connection” between Allah's values and principles on the one hand and the movement of man's history on the other hand are simply unaware of Allah's manifest will. These are the types who cannot see these social laws in history as well as in their own modern times. Corrupt governments and establishments have done an excellent job in hacking away at this understanding of man's relationship with God and God's “input” into the course of human history. When the people cannot understand the aggregate of past events as they are placed into focus here, in this most accurate of records and most outspoken of accounts, then, at that moment, they become inattentive, absentminded, and unwary, a position in which they can be easily exploited.

### **How the Children of Israel Abandoned Moses**

As Moses (ﷺ) was in a transcendent ecstasy with the Creator, a moment in time that captures the majesty of Allah and dwarfs the material of man, his people were deteriorating and falling apart. They were actually hustling and cajoling for a sculptured calf to be their deity, to the exclusion of the One True God. What a contrast between the scene Moses was in — a yearning for Allah (ﷻ), happiness, invocation, and serenity — and the scene of deviation, superstition, and deterioration,

**And in his absence the people of Moses took to revering the effigy of a calf [made] of their ornaments, which gave forth a mooing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them in any way? [And yet] they took to revering it, for they were iniquitous: although [later], when they would smite**

**their hands in remorse, having perceived that they had gone astray, they would say, “Indeed, unless our Sustainer has mercy on us and grants us forgiveness, we shall most certainly be among the lost!” (7:148–149).**

Here, once more, the wobbly and erring nature of the Children of Israel is on display. They take one step forward only to take two or more steps backward. Even after they were delivered from slavery by the transcendent God they still wanted to revere a god that is the product of slave-driving societies. When they left the land of bondage, Egypt, they came across a society of idols, and without hesitation or sense of remorse, they appealed to their prophet to assign them a god-idol on par with the society around them. Their prophet, who is the Muslims’ prophet as well, rebuked them in the harshest terms for this blasphemous folly. But when they were on their own, they saw fit to venerate a statue of a golden calf — lifeless as it was, and manufactured by a Samaritan.<sup>419</sup> This calf was fabricated to make the sound of bovines, maybe as the wind blew through a certain cavity or channel in its form. Upon seeing this graven image of a calf these Israelis were “hooked on it.” And when the Samaritan told them that this was their god and the god of Moses (ﷺ), they adored it.

Imagine the inferior mentality of the Children of Israel. They looked around and as far as they could see and know, all other people, including the Egyptians, had their own idol-gods, hence they should also be entitled to an idol-god of their very own. In the middle of all this Israeli nonsense, the words of truth from on high come to tap on their mental faculty, **“Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them in any way? [And yet] they took to revering it, for they were inequitable.”** How partial and shameful can people be? They admire, adore, and adhere to a material thing they call god, when the true God created them and the means with which they concocted their object of worship, the golden calf.

Even though Hārūn (ﷺ) was among them, he could not deter them from their God-denying attitude and ways. There may have



been a few levelheaded individuals who tried to stem the Israeli rising tide toward this idol, but the latter's numbers were overpowering and the popular will was attracted to a god made out of gold, a precious metal that has always held more perceived value for them than He who created it. After their euphoric attraction to a golden god, the truth began to set in. These Israelis could now see how foolishly they had behaved,

**...although [later], when they would smite their hands in remorse, having perceived they had gone astray, they would say, "Indeed, unless our Sustainer has mercy on us and grants us forgiveness, we shall most certainly be among the lost!" (7:149).**

Their turning to God and asking for forgiveness after the wrong they did indicates that these Israelis still had some good in them. But later on in their history, as Allah (ﷻ) relates, their hearts turned into stone once again.

All this Israeli deviation and its details were unfolding while Mūsá (ﷺ) was in the presence of Allah up on Mt. Sinai,

**And when Moses returned to his people, full of wrath and sorrow, he exclaimed, "Vile is the course you have followed in my absence! Have you forsaken your Sustainer's commandment?" And he threw down the tablets [of the Law], and seized his brother's head, dragging him toward himself. Cried Aaron, "O my mother's son! Behold, the people strong-armed me and almost killed me: so let not my enemies rejoice at my affliction, and count me not among the iniquitous folk!" Said [Moses], "O my Sustainer! Grant You forgiveness to me and my brother, and admit us into Your grace: for You are the most merciful of the merciful!" (7:150–151).**

The words here become a dramatic picture. Mūsá's anger and sorrow are palpable through the words he uses, "How badly

behaved have you been after I left you. Are you trying to rush your Sustainer's affair?" Mūsá's displeasure was evident in the way he pulled his brother toward him by grabbing his head, **"And he [Mūsá] took hold of his brother's head and pulled him to himself."** This motion denotes Mūsá's heightened emotion. Mūsá was right to be angry and outraged because the misconduct was of a scandalous and blasphemous nature.

**"Abhorrent was your behavior after I left you [to go to Mt. Sinai]."** Mūsá left them "in the hands of Allah," as it were, yet they went out looking for an idol deity. He left them adhering to the One God, but then when he got back, he found them clinging to a sculpted calf that made a bellowing sound.

**"Are you rushing your Sustainer's state of affairs?"** In effect, Mūsá was asking the Children of Israel if they were trying to induce and actuate God to do His will in accordance with their own calculation of things. In other words, he was inquiring how they could try to preempt God's decree or agitate His arrangement of their social context.

**"And he threw down the tablets [of the Law], and seized his brother's head, drawing him toward himself."** This motion suggests that Mūsá (ﷺ) was extremely agitated and disturbed. One would have to be very troubled to throw to the ground slabs upon which God's word is inscribed. A person can only do such a thing when the passion turns to furor. It was in these moments, when he was overcome by his own emotions, that Mūsá quickly seized his brother's head and pulled at him. But his brother Hārūn (ﷺ), himself an honorable prophet and a sincere subject of Allah (ﷻ), tapped on the brotherly warmth of Mūsá, as he tried to simmer down his rage, explained his predicament, and said that he spared no advice or words of guidance to dissuade them from what they had done, **"Cried [Hārūn], 'O my mother's son! Behold, the people deemed me to be powerless and almost exterminated me!'"** In this caption, these Israelis in their hysteria for the golden calf virtually stamped Hārūn into oblivion, **"In fact, these folks viewed me having no power, and then were about to finish me off [because of my objection to what they were doing]."**

**“So let not my enemies rejoice at my affliction.”** The enemies being referred to here are the Israelis who demonstrated their malicious satisfaction by their effort to incite a hostile difference between two brothers, indeed two prophets who were brothers, **“And do not classify me with iniquitous people.”** These iniquitous people were progressively in denial of God, and Hārūn (ﷺ) was not a party to their God-averse ways.

Eventually Mūsá (ﷺ) calmed down and regained his composure due to his brother’s mild manner and touching words. Then he pointed himself toward the Almighty, asking forgiveness for himself and his brother, **“Said [Mūsá], ‘My Sustainer! Forgive me and my brother, and move us into [the domain of] Your mercy; for You are the most merciful of the merciful.’”** At this point, Allah (ﷻ) revealed His final word and judgement on people of this nature,

**Verily, as for those who have taken to idolizing the [golden] calf, their Sustainer’s condemnation will overtake them, and ignominy [will be their lot] in the life of this world! For thus do We requite all who invent [such] falsehood. But as for those who do bad deeds and afterward repent and [truly] commit themselves [to Allah] — verily, after such repentance your Sustainer is indeed much-forgiving, oft-merciful (7:152–153).**

This indicates that those who accepted a calf as a god would suffer terribly in this world and life; they would incur God’s wrath and live a worldly life of low status, low quality, and disadvantage.

However, there is still the social norm that those who commit infractions against God, but then plead and pray for forgiveness, will be forgiven, as Allah’s mercy is appealing, receptive, and inclusive. Here, in Allah’s knowledge of the future, He knows that these people will not sustain their God-granted amnesty. They will, in due time, repeat their follies, crimes against God, and whatever else feeds into their “self-interest” or “exclusivity.” And so it was. These Israelis continued to profane the Almighty, until it turned into a “culture.” And along the timeline of this historical buildup of a cul-

ture that desecrates the Almighty, He was generous enough to forgive them numerous times. But they finally ended up incurring His perpetual denunciation and penalty, **“For thus do We repay all who invent [such] heresy.”** This is inclusive not only of the Israelis, but all societies in their image, until the Day of Accountability. As long as the Israelis and non-Israelis deconsecrate the Almighty they will be rebuked and disciplined in proportion to their hideous behavior.

Allah (ﷻ) delivers on His words. Those Israelis who moved their lives from being subjects of the Almighty to becoming devotees of the golden calf were to endure God’s wrath and a low-class life. The last form of punishment imposed upon them was to have them suffer some of the worst forms of torment by “others” until the Day of Resurrection. It may appear at certain and peculiar times of history that these Israelis are “exceptional,” “the chosen race,” or “geniuses,” and they seem above the gentiles (or the *goyim* as the Talmud would have it). This tribal affiliation with Israel does indeed at times control an important segment of the money market. They are behind the scenes in the media, and they are in support of a global financial and political system that reports to them exclusively.

### **The Contemporary Rendition of the Golden Calf**

By describing a few of their tightly organized, behind-the-scenes, influential fellowships, lodges, and orders, the conglomerate cumulation of this Israeli historical buildup away from a God of justice and into an idolatry of finances and commercialism can be better understood. Such information will provide evidence of the depth and the range of what Allah (ﷻ) is illustrating herein.

Firstly, the Israeli-centered Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is an outfit that cares less about providing a homeland for homeless Jewish people than about preserving Israel as a base for the terrorists who created and control that state.<sup>420</sup> It functions and lobbies on behalf of the moneyed Zionist elites (who could ostensibly be Jews, Christians, or Muslims) and the political-

military structure that facilitates Israel's market operations and strategy — a global terror and manipulation network. That is why a modern tribal Israel (the Israeli nation-state) was created after WWII. The influence of its intelligence arm, Mossad, is so vast for such a tiny country because Mossad is really the intelligence agency of choice for the global elite. The vast majority of genuine Jewish people who live in Israel are nothing but a smokescreen for the clandestine operations of the illegal and immoral nation-state. So, too, was the suffering of Jews in Nazi Germany, which resulted from the manipulation of Nazis into power and ruling positions by, among others, “Jewish” financial and political forces. The way Jewish people have been in-gathered has been astonishing. Some writers who have not been able to move beyond racist and exceptionalist views of history condemn this whole thing as a Jewish theological plot, a conspiracy centuries in the making. It is not. The mass of Jewish people are victims, not perpetrators of the events set into motion by the interlocking worldwide elite. Those who control Israel are among the executors of the plot, not the ho-hum Jewish people — as at least some brave rabbis and other Jews have had the courage to point out.

Under the financial and political direction of the Euro-American elite, Mossad, like the State of Israel itself, was created by groups such as the Stern Gang and others, which terrorized Palestine out of existence after the war. Lord Victor Rothschild (1910–1990), the former British intelligence officer and KGB spy, was at the forefront of activities that ultimately led to the creation and continued survival of Israel. According to Simon Schama's book, *Two Rothschilds And The Land Of Israel*, the House of Rothschild had acquired 80% of the land of Israel. It also paid the expenses of the early squatters (colonizers), manipulated the enactment of the 1917 Balfour Declaration that recognized Israel as a Jewish homeland, funded the Nazis, and created Mossad and the terrorist underground in Palestine. Israel was founded by and has always been controlled by a financial elite with Zionist affinities and the rest of the global elite. The “Jewish homeland” scam is just a smokescreen and Jewish people are complicit, if not willing, pawns

in the game of terror that keeps the world on edge. The leaders and participants in this terror network later became leaders and prime ministers of the new Israel. Among them was Yitzhak Shamir (1915–2012), the head of the Mossad assassination squad at the time of US President John F. Kennedy’s murder.<sup>421</sup>

The ADL has always been a Mossad front in the United States and further afield; it evolved from an organization set up before WWI to brand as “anti-Semitic” the New York police commissioner who was determined to destroy the mobsters, many of whom were Jewish. To this day the ADL works, mostly covertly, to condemn as “anti-Semitic” anyone getting close to the truth. The former Mossad agent, Victor Ostrovsky, has confirmed all this in his books, *By Way Of Deception* and *The Other Side Of Deception*, which massively expose the extent of Mossad’s worldwide operations and what he calls the “Judeo-Nazis” who control Israel and the Mossad. The ADL has tremendous influence, even control, of the mainstream media via other parts of the elite network. As with Mossad, it prefers to use other people and organizations as fronts for its activities, so no one knows where the motivation for stories, attacks, and assassinations is really coming from. Mossad (short for *HaMossad leModi’in uleTafkidim Meyuhadim*, meaning “The Institution for Intelligence and Special Tasks”) has a genius for diverting attention from its own responsibility by producing “patsies” to take the blame — “false flags” as they are called in intelligence parlance. The ADL, which is part of B’nai B’rith, is based at United Nations Plaza in New York. B’nai B’rith, meaning “Sons of the Alliance,” was established in 1843. Many of its speakers openly supported slavery during the American Civil War and it covertly supports and controls the Ku Klux Klan. Today this same B’nai B’rith seeks to label leading African Americans as “anti-Semitic” and racist.<sup>422</sup>

Meyer Lansky (1902–1983) was devoted to Israel and therefore an elitist insider. His network played a crucial role in supplying guns and funds to the terror groups of Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin, David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Shamir, and others, as they shot and bombed the State of Israel into existence. He then became a major supplier of the same to Israel. Lansky, Mossad, the ADL, and Israel

were as one. Morris Dalitz (1899–1989), an intimate of Lansky in his gangster network, was given the ADL's annual Torch of Liberty award. His terror activities were not deemed as important as his contributions to Israel and the ADL. Indeed, his terror activities on behalf of the ADL may well have swung voting results in elections.<sup>423</sup>

Whenever the heat was on the United States, Lansky would run to Israel, ultimately settling there. Lansky, and by extension Israel, was trailing John F. Kennedy for a long time and, of course, the former hated the Kennedy family because of his conflict with Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr. (1888–1969), John's father. It was a Lansky henchman on the West Coast (of the United States) called Mickey Cohen (1913–1976) who was behind the introduction of Kennedy to the film star, Marilyn Monroe, after which they began a now much publicized affair. The vehicle for this meeting was Cohen's close friend, the entertainer Joey Bishop, who was a member of the Frank Sinatra clique known as "The Rat Pack." The idea was to use Monroe to pump Kennedy for information about his attitude toward Israel, should he become president. She was, of course, later murdered, although it was made to look like "suicide." Those who killed her also killed Kennedy.<sup>424</sup>

Mickey Cohen was Lansky's man in Hollywood where the film industry had long been a propaganda machine for the elite's agenda and version of "history." It still is today, only the names have changed. Cohen also specialized in compromising screen stars sexually and then blackmailing them. He was another financier and political manipulator on behalf of Jewish terror groups and the State of Israel. Today as yesterday, this elite has the information engineered to give the impression that "God" would approve of what they do. One of Cohen's close associates was Menachem Begin (1913–1992), then head of the terrorist group, Irgun. Jimmy "the Weasel" Fratianno, a leader of the West Coast mafia, told of a meeting he attended in Bel Air to raise money for Begin's terrorists,

After [Cohen's] little speech, we start moving around the room and Mickey's rabbi introduces us to a guy called Menachem Begin, who's the boss of Irgun, an under-

ground outfit in Palestine. This guy's wearing a black armband and he tells us he's wanted back there for bombing a hotel that killed almost a hundred people. He's a f---ing lamster [on the run].<sup>425</sup>

Begin, as prime minister of Israel, later won the Nobel Peace Prize! Gary Wean, a detective sergeant in the Los Angeles Police Department, had the job of monitoring Cohen's activities. In his book, *There's a Fish in the Courthouse*, Wean confirms the story about Marilyn Monroe and the Cohen-Begin connection,

At the time the rabbis were pushing them hard as hell to squeeze every bit of dough they could get out of Hollywood for Israel. Begin was spending more time hanging around Cohen in Hollywood than in Israel. Begin desperately wanted to know what Kennedy's plan was for Israel if he became president.<sup>426</sup>

Another of Cohen's associates and a leading errand boy and operative for Meyer Lansky was Jack Rubinstein. He's better known today as Jack Ruby, the man who killed the Kennedy "patsy," Lee Harvey Oswald.<sup>427</sup>

A second front for this historical climax of an Israeli golden calf deity, from which there was no permanent atonement, is the Bilderberg Group (BIL). The creation of the European Community and the Bilderberg Group was facilitated by one man in particular, the Polish socialist, Józef Retinger (1888–1960), a founder of the European Movement and fellow conspirator with Jean Monnet (1888–1979). It was Retinger and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands who suggested regular meetings of European foreign ministers. Out of these meetings came the customs union known as the Benelux Countries (Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxemburg), a forerunner to the European Community. Appropriately, it was in a speech at Chatham House to the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) that Retinger set out his vision of a Europe in which countries would "relinquish part of their sovereignty."<sup>428</sup>



In London he met Averell Harriman, then US ambassador to England. Harriman arranged for him to visit the United States to gather support for the Independent League for Economic Cooperation, also known sometimes as the Economic League for European Cooperation, which Retinger was organizing. In America, Retinger (in his own words) enjoyed widespread approval for his plans from Russel C. Leffingwell, senior partner in the J.P. Morgan Bank and official of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR); David Rockefeller, the CFR chairman from 1946–1953; New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller (CFR member); William Wiseman (Committee of 300), partner in Kuhn, Loeb & Co., the Rothschild company; George Franklin, the CFR executive director from 1953–1971 and an “in law” to the Rockefeller family; US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles; and many other familiar characters. By this time, Retinger had already formed the American Committee on a United Europe with Allen Dulles, the first head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and William Donovan, the head of the CIA’s predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).<sup>429</sup>

From these and other discussions came the idea of a grouping of leading politicians, political advisors, media owners and executives, multinational CEOs and banking executives, military leaders, and educationalists, who would meet to decide the future of the world. It would become known as the Bilderberg Group, named after the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeek, the Netherlands, where the first meeting took place from May 29–31, 1954. At the heart of the Bilderberg Group’s formation were the Rothschilds and people like Retinger, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, Paul Rykens (the chairman of the soap and food giant, Unilever), and that man again, Averell Harriman.<sup>430</sup>

The influence of Harriman on the 20th century can hardly be overstated, although most people will never have even heard of him. It was Harriman who arranged the lend-lease supplies to Britain and the Soviet Union; was the leading administrator of the Marshall Plan in Europe (which directed the policies of recipient countries); introduced the defense budget procedures with Jean Monnet and the British civil servant, Edwin Plowden, for the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which are still used today; headed the Mutual Security Administration, which rearmed Europe during the Cold war. This was the man whose family businesses supported the emergence of Adolf Hitler and the eugenics movement.<sup>431</sup>

Prince Bernhard, the former German SS officer, German spy via the I.G. Farben Company, and later a major shareholder with Lord Victor Rothschild in Shell Oil, went to America to arrange the US membership of the Bilderberg Group. Prince Bernhard was born in 1911 as the German Prince of Lupp-Biesterfeld and later worked for I.G. Farben's "NW7" intelligence department. He married Princess Juliana (Committee of 300) of the Netherlands in 1937. They were exiled to London after the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands and this "former" German intelligence operative worked as a top military liaison with allied forces. The man who persuaded Bernhard to be the frontman for the Bilderbergers was that arch manipulator, Lord Victor Rothschild.<sup>432</sup>

The annual meeting of the Anglo-European-American elite known as the Bilderberg Group was to become a key component in the elite network, which forms the secret government of the world today. Among those who attended that first meeting at the Bilderberg Hotel in 1954 were David Rockefeller (CFR); Dean Rusk (CFR, Trilateral Commission, Rhodes Scholar), the head of the Rockefeller Foundation and Secretary of State under John F. Kennedy; Joseph E. Johnson (CFR), head of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the US secretary of the Bilderbergers; Denis Healey (Trilateral Commission, RIIA, Committee of 300), the British Labor Party minister of defense from 1964–1970 and chancellor of the exchequer from 1974–1979; Hugh Gaitskell, the future leader of the British Labor Party before his death in the early-1960s; and Lord Boothby, who worked with Winston Churchill on the unification of Europe. Denis Healey has attended more Bilderberg meetings since 1954 than any other United Kingdom politician. He also became chairman of another elite creation, the International Monetary Fund Interim Committee, and he was given a grant by the Ford Foundation to launch the elite's Institute of Strategic Studies, which began operating in London in 1958.

For 12 years, Healey, a leading member of the Fabian Society, served on the council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and became a member of the Rockefellers' Trilateral Commission (TC) in 1979.<sup>433</sup>

The Bilderberg Group consists of a small core elite, known as the Steering Committee. This unelected body was headed in its inception by Prince Bernhard, a close friend of the British royal family. He remained chairman until he resigned in 1976 when he was implicated in the Lockheed bribery scandal. Lord Home (Committee of 300), the former British prime minister, took over as chairman and since 1991 that post has been held by Lord Carrington. He is an extremely close associate of former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Carrington was a former British cabinet minister, secretary general of NATO, member of the Committee of 300, and the President of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Peter Rupert Carrington came from a family that made its money from banking. Carrington was on the board of Hambros Bank (Committee of 300 designate), which has been linked with the Michel Sindona financial scandal in Italy. This was, in turn, connected with the infamous P2 Freemasonry Lodge that blew Italian politics apart. Among Lord Carrington's other business interests have been directorships at Rio Tinto Zinc, Barclay's Bank, Cadbury Schweppes, Amalgamated Metal, British Metal, Christies (the auctioneers), and the chairmanship of the Australian New Zealand Bank.<sup>434</sup>

In his book, *The English Rothschilds*, Richard Davis reports that Lionel Rothschild was a frequent visitor to the Carrington home in Whitehall. The two families are related by the marriage of the Fifth Earl of Rosebery to Hannah Rothschild, daughter of Mayer Rothschild, in 1878. During the ceremony, she was given away, as the British say, by then Prime Minister Disraeli. The Bilderberg elite, like Carrington and those on the Steering Committee, coordinate the regular attendees of Bilderberg meetings (who know the real game plan) and those invited on a rare or one-time basis (who may not know the true agenda of the organization, but can be fed the party line that world institutions are the way to peace and prosperity). The elite are also very efficient manipulators of the ego and

many politicians feel themselves to have “arrived” on the international stage if they are invited to attend.<sup>435</sup>

The Bilderberg Group meets once a year and always in the strictest secrecy. The hotels are cleared of everyone except the Bilderbergers and the hotel staff. The meetings discuss the strategy required over the following 12 months to further the goals of the New World Order, and it cooperates with associated organizations. Not a word of the discussions is allowed to be reported in the mainstream press — and this, despite the attendance of major media figures like the late Katharine Graham (CFR, TC), the former owner of the *Washington Post*; and Conrad Black (TC), the owner of the Hollinger Group, which controls the *London Daily Telegraph*, the *Jerusalem Post*, the *Spectator*, and scores of other media organizations around the world. Graham was also co-chairman (with Arthur Ochs Sulzberger of the *New York Times*) in the jointly-produced *International Herald Tribune*, another propaganda sheet for the global elite. Graham was further connected with *Newsweek* magazine and the news agency, *Associated Press* (AP), which feeds information to countless media outlets around the world — not information about the Bilderberg Group, however, or the CFR or Trilateral Commission.<sup>436</sup>

Three board members of Black’s Hollinger empire, and/or the *Daily Telegraph*, are Henry Kissinger, Lord Carrington, and Evelyn de Rothschild. Black has served on the Bilderberg Steering Committee. His Hollinger Group has an interesting history. It was formerly known as the Argus Corporation, which evolved from a company set up by the elite British intelligence unit of WWII, the Special Operations Executive, thanks to the leading economic warfare expert, Edward Plunket Taylor. He was a business partner of George Montegu Black, Conrad’s father. Both were involved in brewing in Canada and their rise paralleled that of the Bronfmans, the family of a Canadian gangster of the Prohibition period (1920–1933). Today the Bronfmans are closely connected with the notorious elite organization, the ADL. In 1940, Edward Plunket Taylor was personally appointed by Winston Churchill to the Special Operations Executive. His cover was to chair a private

company called War Supplies Ltd, which was created by the Special Operations Executive. Taylor and George Montegu Black made a vast fortune through this company and it continued after the war as the Argus Corporation, now the Hollinger group. Taylor left in 1970 to draft the banking laws for the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas which, as a result, became “offshore” havens for dodgy money. Under Conrad Black’s stewardship, a stream of Bilderbergers and other names mentioned in this account have been appointed to the board of *Telegraph* newspapers and the Hollinger Group. And the masses are led to believe that the press is free!<sup>437</sup>

Another member of the “golden calf” Bilderberg Steering Committee is Andrew Knight, the former executive on the *Economist*, Black’s *Daily Telegraph*, and later the executive chairman of Rupert Murdoch’s News International which, in Britain, owns the *Sun*, *Today*, the *News of the World*, the *Times*, and *Sunday Times*. Knight was on the board of that organization. Since 1982, he has been part of the Council of Management of the Ditchley Foundation, based at Ditchley Park, near Oxford, in a castle built for the Earl of Lichfield in the 16th century. The Ditchley Foundation was given the property by Ronald and Marietta Tree. Ronald was a former high flyer in British Intelligence. The Steering Committee of the Bilderberg Group often holds its monthly meetings at the castle. The Ditchley Foundation is a New World Order front organization that works closely with the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations in London, which a number of researchers and published works have claimed is a center for the study of mass mind manipulation. The American branch of the Ditchley Foundation is run by Cyrus Vance (CFR, TC, Committee of 300), secretary of state under former US President Jimmy Carter and a director of the Rockefeller Foundation. The number of journalists and media executives in the Bilderberg Group and in other strands in the network is very substantial, but do not expect to find a word about these meetings in the mainstream media.<sup>438</sup>

Behind the Bilderbergers are the Rothschilds and the Rockefellers. Recently, Henry Kissinger was a major manipulator, albeit as a puppet of those who really control him. Kissinger is an elite mem-

ber of the Bilderberg Group, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, and is connected with the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Rockefeller/Rothschild Chase Manhattan Bank, and the Rockefeller Foundation. He also runs his own organization, Kissinger Associates, among whose founding directors includes Lord Carrington. Kissinger and Carrington have close connections with Lord Roll of Ipsden (TC, Committee of 300), a board member of Kissinger Associates. Lord Roll (formerly Eric Roll) was the president of the merchant bank, S.G. Warburg. Another close friend of Kissinger in England was British Intelligence operative and spy, Lord Victor Rothschild.<sup>439</sup>

The now court-killed *Spotlight* newspaper in Washington, DC, which sought to publish material that the mainstream media would not report, was constantly seeking to infiltrate Bilderberg meetings. It had a good year in 1991 when it obtained the guest list of the meeting in Baden-Baden, Germany. Among the names were David Rockefeller and a stream of US administrators, politicians, and company heads. Bill Clinton was there, then as governor for Arkansas, but he was soon to be president of the United States. Clinton is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission, two of many characteristics this Democrat shares with his predecessor in the White House, the Republican George H.W. Bush. Conrad Black was there, as always, and so was another elite Bilderberger, the longtime head of Fiat, Gianni Agnelli (Committee of 300). He was the richest and most powerful figure in Italian society with interests in banking, insurance, chemicals, textiles, armaments, and publishing, reputed to be worth \$60 billion. His publishing empire includes two of the three leading newspapers in Italy, *La Stampa* and *Corriere dela Sera*. These newspapers are not going to tell the reading public that their owner is a leading voice in the Bilderberg Group. Henry Kissinger described him as “one of the people in this world I like the most.”<sup>440</sup>

European royalty was represented by two regular attendees, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands (Committee of 300), the daughter of Prince Bernhard, and Queen Sophia of Spain. The British delegation included John Smith, the late leader of the Labor

Party, who was also a Trilateralist; Gordon Brown, the shadow Labor chancellor; Andrew Knight; Lord Roll of Ipsden; Lawrence Freedman, the head of the Department of War Studies at Kings College; Christopher Hogg, the chairman of Courtaulds; and Patrick Wright, the permanent undersecretary of state and head of the Diplomatic Service. Manfred Worner, the late secretary general of NATO, was there and so was John R. Galvin, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe at SHAPE headquarters. Galvin has been an advocate of NATO operations outside its official sphere of influence. The secretary general of NATO is also a Bilderberg appointment; most, if not all, of them have been Bilderbergers. In more recent times, Bilderberger Joseph Luns, was replaced by Lord Carrington, who was followed by Manfred Worner, and after his death in 1994, he was replaced by another regular Bilderberger, Willy Claes, the Belgian foreign minister (who has since been questioned by Belgian police investigating corruption). The latest head of NATO, the Spaniard, Javier Solana, has been constantly pressing the Bilderberg Group agenda for a European army, the expansion of NATO into the former Soviet Union, and for NATO to operate outside its designated area. According to the *Spotlight*, the introduction of the world army was high on the agenda in Baden-Baden, with Henry Kissinger saying in one of his Bilderberg forums,

A United Nations army must be able to act immediately, anywhere in the world, without delays involved in each country making its own decisions based on parochial considerations.<sup>441</sup>

And of course, this Kissingerian logic would go as follows: if there just happened to be lots of conflicts in which UN peacekeeping forces were exposed as inadequate and ineffective as in Bosnia, Rwanda, etc., the public outcry could be met with the pre-packaged solution that should the people agree to give the UN forces more powers, they could respond quicker and be as effective as needed. This is typically how the powers that be craft and choreograph the problem, its reaction, and the final solution. Kissinger also said he

was delighted with the way George W. Bush was able to declare war on Iraq by going directly to the United Nations when under the US Constitution, only Congress is allowed to declare war. If Americans could be persuaded to surrender war-making decisions to the UN and let their young men die wearing a UN uniform, fighting under a UN flag, “parochial nationalism” in Britain, France, and elsewhere would disappear, Bilderberg speakers said, according to *Spotlight* informants. Bill Clinton has pressed for just such a policy in Bosnia and further efforts to do this will keep on occurring through other UN operations.<sup>442</sup>

The same old names that keep coming up everywhere attended the June 1994 Bilderberg meeting in Finland. Among the invited high and mighty was Peter D. Sutherland (TC, Committee of 300), the Director General of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT), which is an elite front to bring down trade barriers and put all countries at the mercy of the elite-controlled world economic system. Sutherland was a perfect choice for the job as a former member of the Commission of the European Community. He was a Bilderberger before he became head of world trade. His successor as the top man at the World Trade Organization, the Italian, Renato Ruggiero, is also a Bilderberger. Another regular Bilderberger, the Netherlands prime minister, Ruud Lubbers, was also there in Finland, along with bankers like J. Martin Taylor, the chief executive of Barclays Bank. Two other names of significance to British voters are Tony Blair (Labor Party) and Kenneth Clarke (Conservative Party). They attended the 1993 Bilderberg meeting in Vouliagment, Greece, where David Owen (TC) spoke about Yugoslavia and the future of Europe. Tony Blair, then the opposition home affairs spokesman, went on to become Labor leader and prime minister, while Kenneth Clarke would become the chancellor of the exchequer. Both support a federal Europe.<sup>443</sup>

In June 1995, the Bilderberg Group met at three exclusive hotels, The Grand, The Park, and The Palace, on a mountainside at Burgenstock in Switzerland. It was a rare occasion when they met in the same place twice. The roads and paths to the hotels were blocked by Swiss police and the military manned lookout posts



across the mountain — all this for a private meeting of an organization that operates outside the “democratic” process.<sup>444</sup>

A third front for the worshipers of the golden calf, who are undoing the repentance of thousands of years ago, is the so-called Black Nobility, an ancient grouping of “blue bloods” that interconnects within the global elite. It has its base in Italy, particularly in Venice and Genoa. Both John Cabot (real name Giovanni Cabotto) and Christopher Columbus lived in Genoa before “discovering” different parts of the Americas within four years of each other. Today an heir to Giovanni is claimed by scores of researchers to be a key member of one of the Black Nobility families. This was Gianni Agnelli (1921–2003), longtime head of the Fiat Motor Company until 1996 and a leading Bilderberger. The Agnelli family dominates Italy and it is said, only half jokingly, that the main responsibility of an Italian prime minister is to “polish Agnelli’s doorknobs.” Agnelli had a much publicized relationship with Pamela Churchill, Winston’s daughter-in-law, before she married that man again, Averell Harriman. She was a leading fundraiser for Bill Clinton and became US ambassador to Paris. The Agnelli family was closely connected with Mussolini, and Gianni’s grandfather was made a senator for life by the fascist leader. Some families of the Black Nobility in Venice and Rome claim an ancestry back to the Roman Emperor Justinian, a man reputed to have taken references to reincarnation out of the biblical texts in the year 553CE. They have a desire to return to a system symbolized by the Roman Empire and they are a major force within the global elite. This “noble” line would appear to go back at least a thousand years, probably far longer, and emerged in part through the Guelf and Ghibelline conflicts in Italy during the 12th and 13th centuries.<sup>445</sup>

The name Guelf came from the name Welf, a German prince competing for control of the Holy Roman Empire, and the name Ghibelline came from the name of the castle owned by his opponents, the Hohenstaufen family. The Guelfs supported the pope and the Ghibellines supported the rule of the Hohenstaufen family. Great conflict followed, with the Guelfs triumphant in the end. The Guelfs (Black Nobility) became immensely powerful through

their later control of banking and international trade. They set up great financial centers in Lombardy and dominated the scene so much that Lombard became the name given to all Italian bankers in Florence, Genoa, Venice, and Milan.<sup>446</sup>

Eventually they expanded their influence northward to Hamburg, Amsterdam, and London. Today the Black Nobility also controls the financial centers of Switzerland where the spoils of the drug trade and other illegal activities are laundered behind the facade of Swiss respectability. The Black Nobility were at the heart of the slave trade from where the fortunes of many leading American and British families originated and they were behind the Orange Order that put William of Orange on the British throne, and led to the Bank of England and the national debt. In more recent times, the Orange Order has been behind the Protestant wing of the conflict in Northern Ireland.<sup>447</sup>

The Black Nobility includes, or is at least connected to, the Dutch Royal Family of Prince Bernhard, one of the founders of the Bilderberg Group. Its connections extend to London and the British “establishment” families of the old aristocracy and the “new money” aristocracies. Members of the European blue bloods that are closely linked with the British royal family are involved. The Swedish, Dutch, and Spanish royal families are often represented at Bilderberg meetings. In the United Kingdom, Prince Philip and Prince Charles have attended Bilderberg meetings and Queen Elizabeth II is named as a member of the Committee of 300. It is believed by researchers who have investigated the Black Nobility, that at this level the British royal family is subordinate to the Italian members who trace their ancestry back to the original Guelfs and beyond. It may be that the vicious personal attacks on Prince Charles and the taped telephone conversations released to the media, which have done him so much damage, are no accident. Is it part of a coordinated campaign to undermine him? Is he a rebel they wish to destroy? It is possible — for Charles and his brother Andrew, turned down the offer to become Freemasons, an organization with close connections to the British monarchy over the years.<sup>448</sup>

The Illuminati, Black Nobility, or global elite, whatever designation one chooses to use, employ many secret and less secret organizations in pursuit of their global tyranny — and the most all-pervading of them is Freemasonry. Illuminised Freemasonry is the first level down from the Illuminati/Black Nobility, and it retains membership in all the organizations of such networks as the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg Group, and their like-minded brethren.<sup>449</sup>

Another golden-calf glitter is the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The connections between the CIA, organized crime syndicates, and Mossad are endless, not least with the global drug running operations in which the three of them cooperate. During WWII, the Americans used Meyer Lansky and the mafia in a plan known as Operation Underworld (US government code name for the cooperation of Italian and Jewish organized crime figures from 1942–1945 to counter Axis spies and saboteurs along the US northeastern seaboard ports, avoid wartime labor union strikes, and limit theft by black-marketeers of vital war supplies and equipment); it is common knowledge today that they were also used in plots to overthrow Fidel Castro in Cuba, in one of which Jack Ruby was a participant. The global elite elements within the CIA and the global elite's wholly-owned subsidiary, Mossad, are the same organization.<sup>450</sup>

Before, during, and after the assassinations of both John F. and Robert F. Kennedy, the key coordinator of these connections was one James Jesus Angleton, who was educated in his early years in England at Chartridge Hall House in Buckinghamshire and Malvern House in Worcestershire. He was recruited by the CIA's predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), after leaving the Skull and Bones University of Yale. In 1947, he joined the new CIA and progressed to the highly sensitive and pivotal post of head of CIA counterintelligence. According to his biographer, Tom Mangold, his major patrons were Allen Dulles, the CIA director fired by John F. Kennedy, and Richard Helms, who was appointed CIA director by Lyndon B. Johnson after Kennedy's assassination. Mangold says that, in effect, Angleton was given such a free reign to pursue his

own agenda that there was virtually no monitoring or control of his activities. He was a law unto himself. This is very significant because one of Angleton's key roles was the official CIA liaison with Allied foreign intelligence agencies, particularly the Mossad. He was the head of the CIA's Israel desk. Moreover, he had long and intimate ties with David Ben-Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, who despised John F. Kennedy and saw him as a threat to the existence of Israel. Kennedy's war with the CIA also threatened the existence of Angleton's job and power base. Angleton had many reasons to want Kennedy out of the way, but the most important was his connection to, and likely control by, Israel, which then, as now, holds sway over much of the CIA's operation. Wilbur Crane Eveland, a former advisor to the CIA and member of the policy-planning staff at the White House and Pentagon, said,

Stemming from his wartime OSS liaison with Jewish resistance groups based in London, James Angleton had arranged an operational-intelligence exchange agreement with Israel's Mossad, upon which the CIA relied for much of its intelligence about the Arab states.<sup>451</sup>

The Children of Israel have reverted to their divine betrayal days and now use these organizations to serve their self-interest. Two other such organizations are the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the United Nations (UN). The CFR is the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), United States branch. The only major difference between them is that the CFR membership list is more widely available and some of its members have been so disturbed by what they have seen and heard that they have spoken out against it — not many, but some. If only that were the case in Britain, where the Brits leave the Americans standing when it comes to secrecy. Most of the “secrets” that come to the surface in Britain are the ones that have been purposely leaked to undermine a politician, personality, or group, for some desired, manipulative end. This general rule also applies in the US, but the British establishment has had a much longer time to perfect its leaking tech-

niques. Since the formation of the CFR, every president of the United States has been a member except for Ronald Reagan. In truth Reagan was not president, his vice-president George H.W. Bush, a CFR member, was running the show.<sup>452</sup>

It was the Council on Foreign Relations, no doubt with RIIA input and coordination, that brought the United Nations (the successor to the League of Nations) into being. This was the jewel of the post-war manipulators and one of the main reasons WWII was fashioned. By 1945, the world was understandably sick and tired of war and the public mind was open to anything that might prevent more human slaughter. Once again, crafting the problem, its reaction, and the pre-packaged solution brought about the United Nations. The UN Charter was officially accepted by representatives of 50 countries at a meeting in San Francisco on June 26, 1945. But that was only the public culmination of years of behind-the-scenes maneuvering by the Council on Foreign Relations, which controlled the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The writer James Perloff revealed the background to the UN in his 1988 book, *The Shadows of Power: The Council on Foreign Relations and the American Decline*,

In January 1943, the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, formed a steering committee composed of himself, Leo Pasvolosky, Isaiah Bowman, Sumner Welles, Norman Davis, and Morton Taylor. All these men — with the exception of Hull — were in the CFR. Later known as the Informal Agenda Group, they drafted the original proposal for the United Nations. It was Bowman — a founder of the CFR and member of Colonel House's old "Inquiry" — who first put forward the concept. They called in three attorneys, all CFR men, who ruled that it was constitutional. Then they discussed it with Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 15th, 1944. The President approved the plan, and announced it to the public the same day.<sup>453</sup>

In his book, *The American Language*, H.L. Mencken suggests that the term *United Nations* was decided by President Roosevelt

during a meeting with Winston Churchill at the White House in December 1941, shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The US delegation at the founding meeting of the UN was like a roll call of the CFR. It included Isaiah Bowman, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Sumner Welles, Norman H. Davis, James T. Shotwell, and the Russian-born Leo Pasvolsky. They were all CFR members who served during the war on Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policies. In all, 74 CFR members were in the delegation. This was the vehicle through which the birth of the United Nations was manipulated.<sup>454</sup>

The US delegation at the San Francisco Conference also included John J. McCloy (CFR chairman from 1953–1970, a member of the Committee of 300, the chairman of the Ford Foundation and the Rockefellers' Chase Manhattan Bank, and friend and adviser to nine presidents from Roosevelt to Reagan); John Foster Dulles (Hitler supporter, CFR founder, and soon to be US secretary of state); and Nelson Rockefeller (an arch manipulator, four times elected Governor of New York, and vice president in the administration of President Gerald Ford). The background of John J. McCloy typified that of the manipulators who created the UN. He was financial advisor to the Italian fascist government of Benito Mussolini and he played a significant role in Nazi Germany for the Hariman/Bush bank that was financing Hitler. McCloy sat in Hitler's private box at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin at the invitation of Rudolf Hess and Hermann Goring. McCloy was also a member of the Bilderberg Steering Committee.<sup>455</sup>

The secretary general of the conference was the US State Department official and CFR member, Alger Hiss, later exposed as a secret agent employed by the Soviet Union. Hiss was executive secretary of the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference, where he worked with Stalin's man, Vyacheslav Molotov, on the details of the UN Charter. He was described as President Roosevelt's "top international organization specialist" at the Yalta Conference in the Crimea in February 1945, which was also attended by Churchill and Stalin. After guiding the UN into existence, Hiss was made president of the infamous Carnegie Endowment for International

Peace, an appointment made by John Foster Dulles, who ignored information about Hiss' espionage when he was told about it in 1946. Later Hiss was exposed and spent 44 months in prison.<sup>456</sup>

Other covert Communist Party members of the CFR were in the US delegation in San Francisco for the launch of the UN, among them Dexter White, who was also revealed as a Soviet agent. The Council on Foreign Relations directs the United States policy, whatever “party” is officially in power. As John J. McCloy once said,

Whenever we needed a man [for a government position] we thumbed through the roll of the council members and put through a call to New York [the CFR headquarters at Harold Pratt House, 58 E. 68th Street].<sup>457</sup>

The granddaughter of former President Theodore Roosevelt, the newspaper columnist Edith Kermit Roosevelt, summed up the grip of the so called “Eastern Establishment” working through the CFR,

What is the Establishment's viewpoint? Through the Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy administrations its ideology is constant: that the best way to fight Communism is by a One World Socialist State governed by “experts” like themselves. The result has been policies which favor the growth of the superstate, gradual surrender of the United States sovereignty...<sup>458</sup>

Robert W. Lee, writing in the September 1992 edition of *The New American* pointed out that at least 14 of the 18 US secretaries of state since the CFR was founded in 1921 have been members of that organization, including the acting secretary of state at the time of the article, Lawrence Eagleburger. The last eight directors of the CIA, including George H.W. Bush, had been CFR members, and over the previous four decades, the Democratic and Republican Party candidates for president or vice president who were (or became) members of the CFR were Dwight D. Eisenhower, Adlai

Stevenson, John F. Kennedy, Henry Cabot Lodge, Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, Edmund Muskie, George McGovern, Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, Gerald Ford, Nelson Rockefeller, George H.W. Bush, Michael Dukakis, Geraldine Ferraro, and Bill Clinton.<sup>459</sup>

This, then, is the organization that created the United Nations. The UN even built its headquarters in New York on land given free of charge by the Rockefellers. Besides the Rockefellers, manipulators like Morgan, Warburg, Schiff, and Marburg were working the shadows behind the politicians and advisors. The United Nations was sold to the public as a means to bring peace to the world, to solve differences by words, not war. Most of the people who work for the UN genuinely believe that to be its purpose. However, in reality, the UN is but a “Trojan Horse” for the globalist, fascist tyranny known as the New World Order. It is the vehicle through which the world government and world army are being manipulated into place and through which public opinion is being softened up, by conflicts and propaganda, to accept this policy as the only way to bring peace and stability to human affairs. All nine of the UN secretary generals since 1945 have promoted such thinking. One such holder of the office, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, began his career under the Egyptian dictator, Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir. Boutros-Ghali called for a permanent UN army (world army) and for the UN to have the right to levy taxation (world government). His successor, Kofi Annan, wanted the same.<sup>460</sup>

The original United Nations has given birth to a stream of connected organizations that coordinate the New World Order plan in areas like health (World Health Organization, WHO); population control or, more accurately, eugenics (the UN Population Fund, UNFPA); education, science and culture (UNESCO); and the list is getting longer all the time. These organizations are designed to globalize control of all areas of human life. The UN is a front for the Freemason global elite hierarchy.<sup>461</sup>

When Allah (ﷻ) uses words like *pharaoh and his elites*, He is simply conveying a human experience that accompanies the human condition — which, by the way, still exists to this very day. The Qur’an speaks about Pharaoh’s outreach into the world, “**The**



**Pharaoh has reached unprecedented heights in the world and divided its inhabitants into factions” (28:4)**, thereby expanding the Muslim thinking mind to take notice of this fact of life. This means that the committed Muslims should be able to identify this trouble-making segment of humanity, even if it has all the means to cover its trail — and particularly when the Children of Israel are spotlighted in this development.

Pharaoh had his global elite, and today there is a global elite. At the apex of this global empire are the elite who are solidly locked into a coordinated strategy that decides policies and oversees their implementation. It may be that at the highest levels of the global elite are shadowy figures who remain shrouded from public view and scrutiny. The House of Rothschild may fit into this classification. The global elite as a whole is the group of people who are selected and initiated into the higher, sometimes highest, levels of knowledge in the whole of human civil structure and society. Even as they are working today to accelerate the emergence of the New World Order, they will also be looking for others who are deemed to be of the right caliber. Then, as the present personnel “retire” or die, the reins of the conspiracy are handed to the next generation of the elite, just as Averell Harriman was replaced in his role by Henry Kissinger. In the same way newer members of the Agnelli family, who are plugged into the global elite through their formidable world government institutions, may replace the now deceased Gianni Agnelli in the elite hierarchy. So, while “they” — the actual personnel — may change with the generations, the agenda they are working from remains basically the same. It is like passing on a baton in a relay race and, because of the nature of the family structure of much of the elite, the baton is often handed forward across the generations of certain families. This becomes even more probable because the parents indoctrinate the children from the earliest possible age and later introduce them to the same secret societies and ceremonial rites.

The golden calf revered by the Banū Isrā’īl is similarly represented by the Illuminati. Not every member of a secret society or the other more public organizations is part of the elite. There is a

difference between Freemasonry and what may be termed “Illuminised” Freemasonry, those parts of the order that have been infiltrated by Illuminati agents. The world Illuminati, meaning *the illuminated ones*, goes back into the ancient world, a covert force that has created or taken over groups and organizations to manipulate the world in a desired strategic direction away from God. The Illuminati’s greatest weapon is the advanced esoteric knowledge it has passed on through its initiation ceremonies and the misuse and abuse of that knowledge. The most obvious expression of Illuminism was the Bavarian Illuminati officially created by the German professor, Adam Weishaupt, in May 1776, and controlled by the House of Rothschild, the bankers to endless revolutions and wars. It was Weishaupt who used his wing of the Illuminati to infiltrate and take over Freemasonry.<sup>462</sup>

Weishaupt was trained as a Jesuit, which is short for the “Society of Jesus.” The founder of the Jesuits, the Spaniard, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), formed a secret society within this apparently Catholic order and the initiates were called the Alumbrados, meaning *the enlightened, the illuminated*. Conflict followed between the Jesuit “illuminism” and Weishaupt’s German version, battles the followers of Weishaupt mostly won although the Jesuit network is still very much a part of the elite. In pyramid fashion, Weishaupt created 13 degrees of initiation in his Illuminati with the key personnel situated in the top nine degrees. The members were given special Illuminati names, inspired by ancient Rome and Greece; Weishaupt was called Spartacus. These people became members of other secret societies like the Freemasons and “illuminised” them, that is, they overtook them and used them to destabilize nations and hasten the emergence of the New World Order. They did the same within governments, banking, commerce, the military, and the media, on behalf of the elite.<sup>463</sup>

So there is Freemasonry and Illuminised Freemasonry. The former manipulates at one level, but it too is being manipulated by another covert force, the Illuminati, which in turn answers to its global elite. There are organizations within organizations (say, the Freemasonry network within a government) and another organization

within those organizations (the Illuminati membership within the Freemasons). This Illuminised form of Freemasonry became known as The Grand Orient Lodges. It followed the modified Hegelian tradition of infiltrating two extremes and playing one off against the other to create the desired change. Using these methods it was pledged to overthrow the rule of the monarchies, destroy faith in God, put an end to patriotism and some nation-states, abolish the ownership of property, and dismantle traditional social order.<sup>464</sup>

Probably one of the most efficient conduits of behind-the-scenes cabal activity relates to Freemasonry. This silent organization of key members in society fits into this larger, clandestine, worldwide effort to inveigle people to adore and honor the “golden calf” — the deity of finances. The vast majority of Freemasons in the world never progress beyond the bottom three levels or degrees. But above them are another 30 higher degrees in the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, which owes its inspiration to the ancient Knights Templar. Even the 33rd degree is not the top because there are the Illuminati levels above that, and the 33rd degree itself is unofficially divided into two streams, one knowing far more than the other. At each stage, the initiate is told a little more about the true nature of Freemasonry and the real game plan. Those who have reached the 33rd degree are on a different planet in terms of what they know, compared with the Masons on the bottom three levels. Joseph Smith, the “prophet” who founded the Mormon “church,” was a 33rd-degree Freemason. The men who go down to the local Freemasons’ lodge in an average American town or city generally do not have a clue about what their organization is being used for. They have to be kept in the dark if the plan is to work and what better way of doing this than to use these distinct levels of initiation. Only those considered to be “acceptable” progress to the higher levels and find out what is really going on. Those of the “right mind” who have influence in society, right up to presidents and princes, populate the fourth through the 33rd degrees. Above that are the Illuminati levels, which will not be mentioned in any Freemason’s guidebook. Those are the people who actually run the show and they are the liaisons with the influential and more in-

conspicuous power elite. World Freemasonry is a massive pyramid of manipulation.<sup>465</sup>

It was not always as climactic as it is now. It is said that Freemasonry was once a society that was exclusive to those who worked as stonemasons and builders on churches and cathedrals. It was then called Masonry. Their lodges were like trade organizations, some historians claim, and their secrecy and rituals were designed to protect their profession from unskilled outsiders. Most of the Masons' work came from the Catholic Church, ruled from Rome. The immense wealth of the Church, most of it stolen directly or indirectly, paid for the construction of the great cathedrals on which the masons' income largely depended. But disaster struck when Henry VIII broke with Rome in 1534 and formed his own Church of England after Pope Clement VII refused him a divorce. This event not only had massive implications for the future (see *The Robots' Rebellion* by David Icke), but it ensured that many masons were made unemployed. Far from continuing the building programs of Rome, Henry VIII looted the monasteries and everything else he could get away with. He was broke, basically, and there were always wars to fight. One of his targets was the assets of the "fraternities, brotherhoods, and guilds." The masonry societies collapsed in the wake of this royal mugging and the desperate lack of work for their members. Many of the lodges disappeared, along with their ancient records, and little is known about their true history.<sup>466</sup>

The lodges (branches) that survived did so by opening their memberships to people who were not stonemasons, or so the story goes. These newcomers — the businessmen, merchants, landowners, and aristocracy — were called "speculative" masons and soon they far outnumbered the original members. This was the Knights Templar/Illuminati manifesting on the public stage in the guise of Freemasonry. The first recorded initiation of a speculative mason in England occurred in 1646 when Elias Ashmole joined a lodge in Warrington. He was an astrologer and indeed esoteric knowledge was to become an important part of the new Masonry at the higher levels of initiation. Masonry had become Freemasonry and as the years passed, the only remaining connection with the stonemasons

were the symbolic paraphernalia and names for the levels of initiation like apprentice, fellow craft, and master mason. The working tools of the stonemasons — the square, compass, level, plumbline, gauge, gavel, and chisel — were still used in the bizarre ceremonies and rituals and the Freemason's apron was another throwback to the stonemasons. But Freemasonry now had a very different agenda.<sup>467</sup>

During the rituals introduced by the founders of the new Freemasonry, bare-chested initiates were blindfolded with a noose around their necks and a dagger held to their hearts. They had to swear to serve the order and keep its secrets, on pain of a grotesque ritual death. The penalty for divulging the secrets of the Second Degree (the Fellow Craft Mason) was “having my left breast laid open, my heart torn therefrom, and given to the ravenous birds of the air, or devouring beasts of the field as a prey.” In the Third Degree (Master Mason), it was

...being severed in two, my bowels burnt to ashes, and those ashes scattered over the face of the Earth and wafted by the four winds of heaven, that no trace of remembrance of so vile a wretch may longer be found among men, particularly Master Masons.<sup>468</sup>

These are the sorts of ceremonies that conjure up malevolent energies. At the same time, in public, Freemasonry has claimed to be a school of morality, talking of fraternity and “brotherly love.” The public apologists for Freemasonry argue that these rituals are only symbolic, but there is much evidence that not everyone thinks so, including the Freemason known as Jack the Ripper. The powerful ties of loyalty (and fear, too, when necessary) engendered in the membership guarantees for the most part that very few have dared to disclose the secrets, even after leaving the order(s). In fact, while people may cease to pay their fees or turn up at the lodge, the oaths still apply. There is no mechanism by which a Mason, once initiated, can un-swear his oath.<sup>469</sup>

Such oaths were invented to create fear and control. They were not part of the rituals of stonemasons, as some of their few sur-

viving rule books, for example, the so-called Gothic Constitutions, have proved. The penalty for revealing the secrets in those days was to be thrown out of the lodge — a far better fate than having the betrayer's bowels burnt to ashes. The Freemasonry rituals and oaths are based on a piece of invention in the 18th century — the Freemason story of Hiram Abif. According to the Freemasonry account, Hiram Abif was the architect of King Solomon's biblical Temple. The Gothic Constitutions of the stonemasons make no reference to such a man, but he became the Freemasons' martyr figure. According to their version, Hiram refused to betray the secrets to three fellow craft masons armed with masonic tools. They murdered Hiram when he would not reveal his secrets, so the myth goes, and King Solomon ordered a search when he appeared to have gone missing. Hiram's body was discovered "indecently interred" and was reburied with "all respect and reverence." Solomon ordered those responsible for the murder to be executed and in some versions of the story, the killers — Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum — were so full of remorse that they asked to be put to death. Jubela asked for his throat to be cut and his tongue torn out; Jubelo chose to have his left breast torn open and his heart fed to the vultures; and Jubelum was the one who asked for his bowels to be burned to ashes and scattered before the four winds of heaven. This appears to be the origin of the Freemasons' rituals and oaths. Their rituals play out the story and death of Hiram Abif, baring their breasts with their trouser legs rolled up to bare their knees.<sup>470</sup>

The story of Hiram Abif is a fantasy. The Freemasonic thought police have made great play out of the ancient links with the building of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. They have turned it into something akin to the Vatican — and then some. But the Bible, from which the figure of Hiram was taken, describes a very different man. In the first instance, his name was simply Hiram; the addition of Abif came from the founders of masonic myth. Secondly, the Bible does not concur that he was "the most accomplished mason on Earth," as the Freemasons claim. Rather, it says that he was neither a mason nor an architect, but a worker in brass. According to the Book of 1 Kings, he arrived from Tyre after the temple was

finished. The Book of 1 Chronicles says he came before the Temple was built and was an ornamental metal worker. Any stone sills he had were in decoration, not construction. There is another Hiram in the Bible, the King of Tyre, who is not the same man. But he is also held in great esteem by Freemasonry because he is supposed to have supplied Solomon with Lebanese cedarwood for the Temple. Tangentially, the Bible says the Temple was built mostly of wood and was no bigger than a church hall of today (30 x 90 ft). The last thing they needed was a stonemason architect.<sup>471</sup>

But while the story of Hiram Abif and King Solomon is nonsense, it is possible that Freemasonry's drift toward the occult and recondite knowledge originates in ancient Egypt when King Seqenenre (ruled starting in circa 1560BCE) was murdered for refusing to reveal the most secret esoteric knowledge to a rival. If so, this is yet further confirmation that the same stream of knowledge and manipulation stretches from antiquity into modern Freemasonry and the world today. The force that emerged as Freemasonry possibly was, and is, the Knights Templar, which until then had been operating underground, following the papal purge. The pyramid structure allows the elite, the few at the top of Freemasonry, to control the majority by misleading them and keeping them in the dark. The *Illuminati Protocols*, found in the last century, did — whatever people may say about their origin — describe brilliantly how Freemasons are used,

We shall create and multiply Freemasonic lodges in all countries of the world, absorb into them all who may become or who are prominent in public activity, for in these lodges we shall find our principal intelligence office and means of influence. All these lodges we shall bring under one central administration [the Illuminati], known to us alone and to all others absolutely unknown, which will be composed of our learned elders... In these lodges we shall tie together all revolutionary and liberal elements. Their composition will be made up of all strata of society. The most secret political plots will be known

to us and will fall under our guiding hands on the very day of their conception. Among the members of the lodges will be almost all the agents of international and national police since their service is for us irreplaceable in the respect that the police is in a position not only to use its own particular measures with the insubordinate, but also to screen our activities and to provide pretexts for discontents... (Protocol 15).<sup>472</sup>

The *Protocols* describe the Masons in the lower degrees — the great majority — as part of a “show army” that is there only “to kick dust in the eyes of their fellows.” Everyone manipulates everyone else. Unless the secret society background of people employed by the controlling institutions — be they police, politicians, doctors, military officers, editors and journalists, or government officials — is known, and unless the values and purposes of that secret society are known, how can it be possible to know the agenda of those whom the presidents, prime ministers, and community leaders are working for? These people pledge their total allegiance to their secret society in these ritual ceremonies, so what happens to their allegiance to the public they have been elected or appointed to serve? While people in the secret societies are allowed into such positions of control and influence without even having to acknowledge their membership, the whole system is open to the most outrageous corruption — and that is exactly what happens. The system is outrageously corrupt. Not every member is corrupt; most may not be. But it does not take many to have an outrageously deleterious impact on society.<sup>473</sup>

Once Freemasons succeed in getting the top positions and decide which people are recruited or promoted within an organization, they can make sure that fellow Freemasons get into the key positions of power. One generation of Freemasons follows another as the baton is handed over. Achieving this, they can run an organization or a country — or a world — almost any way they like. Freemasons also commit themselves to helping each other in distress. That sounds very nice, but what about those who are not part of the club



— the “Profane,” as we are called? Does that mean they are subject to lesser consideration when faced with a Freemason in authority? In at least a number of cases, the answer is most certainly “yes.” The Freemasons have a series of signs and words that allow them to recognize each other, including the funny handshake. These also include the Freemasons’ sign for “grief and distress” (that is, “Get me out of trouble”), the verbal version of which is “Will no one help the widow’s son?” The widow’s son is Hiram Abif.<sup>474</sup>

These signs and signals impart great utility when a Freemason is arrested by a fellow Freemason police officer or has to appear in court before a Freemason judge. This may not always work, of course, but whoever thinks it does not happen is not living in the real world. The political determination to tackle this dangerous injustice is simply nonexistent, because either the politicians involved, or all parties, are Freemasons themselves, or they are connected with the wider network, or they are frightened to act because their position depends on them not upsetting the secret society elite. Some leading politicians are high ranking Freemasons. Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister at the time of the opium wars against China, was the Grand Patriarch of the Grand Orient (Illuminati) version of the order. The former French president, Francois Mitterand (Committee of 300), was also a Grand Master of the Grand Orient.<sup>475</sup>

Many of those involved with the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg Group, and all the rest will also be Freemasons or members of some connected secret society. But they are all answerable to the same master — the global elite. In most countries, there is an elite Freemasonry “cell” that is particularly powerful and may be unknown even to some high-ranking Freemasons. A good number of these cells are linked to the Illuminati-controlled forms of Freemasonry — the Grand Orient Lodges. The French Revolution was partly hatched and coordinated by the Grand Orient Lodge in Paris. In Britain, there are, according to some, an elite cell called the Parlour Club and a European elite group called the Club of the Isles. In the United States, there is the Skull and Bones Society, which is closely related to Freemasonry,

and so is the Orange Order, which is at the heart of the Northern Ireland conflict. The Round Table is designed on Freemasonic lines and links in with that network. The infamous Knights of Malta is another elite organization that coordinates its covert activities with Illuminised Freemasonry and has enormous influence within the system. Its official head is said to be the pope! The best known of the elite Freemasonry cells is the Propaganda Masonica Due Lodge (P2) based in Italy, but operating in other countries also. When this was discovered, it produced one of the greatest political scandals in history. Ask any of the above clandestine organizations what they think about present-day Israel, and the answer will be, no doubt, die-hard fealty to its founding and survival.<sup>476</sup>

### A High Worldly Status Does Not Mitigate Inevitable Justice

**As of a certainty, those who took to revering the [golden] calf will be allocated [a portion of] their Sustainer's wrath as well as indignity in worldly life. Such do We penalize all who belie [Us] (7:152).**

This *āyah* bespeaks the schism inherent in the relationship between Mūsá and Hārūn (ﷺ) on the one hand, who were God-oriented and on a clear course toward their Creator, and their own people, on the other hand, who were moving in an opposite direction away from their Creator as they venerated and idolized a calf fashioned from mammon.

These Children of Israel, once Moses (ﷺ) left them to go to Mt. Sinai, no longer felt the discipline of conscience that “reports to God” and not to Moses. They thought that as long as Moses was no longer with them, they could have a “fling” with idolatry as “everyone else was doing” and thus assimilate into the larger society around. This Israeli social abandonment of God is what resulted in a godly punishment. Their moral, social, religious, and psychological crime was so beyond the pale that to atone for it they would have to undergo a “social purification process” on the order

of “mass casualties” either through a civil war or a war of attrition. This much can be ascertained from the *āyah* in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*,

**Then, atone unto your life-giving Creator, thus kill yourselves; this is best for you with your life-giving Creator. Hence, He accepted your atonement, for He is the One who grants amnesty and mercy (2:54).**

These Israelis committed the most serious crime against God and they had to pay for it with the most serious atonement. In addition to that price, which was attended by acts of war or violence that consume lives, they were plagued with chagrin and shame in this life on earth. This they would endure through geographical dislocation and social alienation. Other peoples of the earth would look down on them and have no respect for them. At the heart of the matter is the Israeli disregard for the aura and glory of God and their fetish for worldly material attractions and earthly sensational lusts. They have had and still have a knack for a passionate materialism. This “hold on to the world at any price” attitude and behavior eventually brings them down on the scale of esteem in whichever society they happen to be in. Their loss of social prestige hits all-time lows almost everywhere they go. This habitat of humiliation they find themselves in is echoed in another *āyah*, “**They [the Israelis] have been clamped with self-abasement and inferiority and they end up with Allah’s wrath...**” (2:61).

With such features and characteristics, a thinking Muslim wonders how such substandard and low-level Israelis could have stolen the land of Palestine from its historical inhabitants. One of the answers is that the “Muslims” themselves, who are the majority people in and around the Holy Land, deteriorated so precipitously and drastically that they could no longer stave off Zionist and imperialist incursions to dispossess the Holy Land of its Muslim and Christian occupants and replace them with a people who are known to “sell God” for a silver or gold coin. The Muslims, however, are not going to remain deficient and defective for too much longer. Political analysts and prognosticators already sense

the “Islamic comeback” as the first wave of Islamic reassertion is taking root in and around the Holy Land. There are social laws at work that will assuredly secure the undoing of the Zionist-imperialist project in the Holy Land.

True, the Yahūdī worldwide nexus is in a unique position, especially insofar as it virtually owns the global economic and financial scene, both ideologically as well as practically. The Yahūd are scattered throughout the mainstream media and broadcast operations. They also have a strong hand in the governments that are maintaining this type of status quo. But in the not so distant future these Israelis will have to sustain a form of punishment that will trail them until the Day of Resurrection. They will suffer, and suffer dearly, for all the crimes against humanity, crimes against Muslims, and crimes against God and prophets that they of their own free will are responsible for.

Their temporary self-superiority complex relative to the *goyim* “scum” is just the tip of the iceberg. Never mind that they consider in their Talmudic way other races, peoples, and scripturalists to be despicable and subservient to their control and command. No one should be fooled by the past two generations of Israelis who dislocated a Palestinian population after virtually redrawing a nationalist and capitalist map of the whole world. The watching Muslims should not be deceived by a queue of clients who are falling over each other to pay their tributes to the Zionist deities dwelling in a colonized Holy Land. The people of the world should not be duped by the layers of political, financial, educational, and religious classes that are wrapped around a forged “biblical Israel” run by culprits, criminals, capitalists, and corporate captains who will do everything within their means to marginalize the Lord and centralize the race. These Israelis around Zion, though they are blind to it, are setting themselves up for God’s promise and decree. What they have been doing in the course of the last Israeli century is to agitate hundreds of millions, recruit scores of millions, and militarize tens of millions of people against their historical Zionist venture. They have won almost all the ruling classes to their side, but they have lost any popular support for their cause. The future

explosion of a worldwide wrath against these Israelis and Zionists shall be a spectacle to behold.

The only reason they were able to “embezzle” Palestine is that, for a short time, its occupants lost their way. The original scripture-bearing people of Palestine turned away from God’s word of assembly to false gods of nationalism and materialism, only to experience the ancient Israeli punishment of “killing themselves” in civil wars and wars of attrition to gain vitiating for the serious crime of forsaking God and prophet. Looking around today, these very same Palestinian and Arab people are rediscovering their own true scriptural selves in the heat of their atonement. The Zionist-imperialist project was successful for a short while in selling them political philosophies and ideological indoctrinations. The Islamic spirit is now returning to Muslims of commitment and courage.

The Zionists and imperialists enjoyed their colonization while it lasted — every bloody chapter of it. They relished the massacres of Dayr Yāsīn, Qibyah, and Qānā. They rode high on their military campaigns of 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. No longer. The military tide is beginning to turn against these lowlifes and misfits. The coming generation of committed and confident Muslims is on the horizon. Their movement worldwide is taking on an air of unstoppability as it replenishes their hearts with an unmistakable affinity for Allah (ﷻ). The Zionist-imperialist crime machine has done so much harm to the world that it may lead to a convergence between the immediate victims of Zionism and imperialism and their distant victims that will usher in a divine day of restitution. The outcome of this pending day shall remand the Zionist cabal back to its opprobrium and infamy. One way or the other, the systemic and universal injustices of Zionism and imperialism will catch up with their bosses, who will then be cut down to their leprechaun size.

**But for those who do bad deeds and afterward repent and [truly] commit themselves [to Us] — verily, after such repentance your Sustainer is indeed much-forgiving, very merciful (7:153).**

Even after all this, Allah (ﷻ) is still extending an open hand to the Israelis, the Zionists, the imperialists, the evildoers of every cast and color: if they were to approach Him with “bleeding hearts of repentance” He will forgive them their transgressions and amnesty their crimes. But is it possible for these tyrants in the global elite who are calling the shots, planning the wars, and massacring the destitute to take time off from their hobbies, pastimes, and deadly skills to ask God for forgiveness for such crimes against humanity as are taking place in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and other places around the world?

These wars have been concocted and imposed on peoples the world over by elites and hierarchies that have broken away from God, sponsored a way of life that denies God, and pursued a geostrategic dominance in an imagined absence of God. This imagined absence of God is the presumptuousness that led those initial Israelis to idolize a calf. Since then, there has been a history of elites and rulers who, once God is no longer the authority in life, begin to do whatever they want to do, especially what is immoral, wrong, and criminal. The ancient Israelis were guilty of “sidestepping” God, the Arabian Israelis during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) were guilty of trying to evade God, and the contemporary Israelis are guilty of the same sin and crime. But God’s justice will catch up with them sooner than later; about this there can be no doubt. And it will be done in a manner commensurate with their crimes against humanity, their crimes of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

**And when Moses’ anger abated, he took up the tablets,  
in the writing of which there was guidance and grace  
for all who stood in awe of their Sustainer (7:154).**

This *āyah* alludes to the fact that Mūsá (ﷺ) was gripped by anger. However, it did not control him for long, as it subsided through the counsel of his brother. Even so, the moral lesson here is less about managing one’s anger than about the human behavior that may have caused Mūsá to fly into a “fit of rage.” And this refers to the breakaway attitude and the sheer disobedience of Banū Isrā’īl with

respect to the merciful God who had just saved them from hundreds of years of captivity and slavery in Egypt. As if they were slapping the hand that had redeemed them and spitting in the well that had quenched their thirst, these Israelis and their social attitude were enough to drive anyone, even a prophet, out of his normal demeanor. But then, when Mūsá regained his composure he once again took hold of the tablets he had hitherto thrown to the ground.

Mūsá was now calm. The tablets were in his hands, and most of his people had come back to their scriptural senses. It is said that Mūsá fasted for 40 days after he slammed the tablets to the ground and broke them.<sup>477</sup> Whatever the case may be, Mūsá resumed his mission by exhorting the Children of Israel onto a course in life that is enlightened with scripture and informed by God. This may have been one of the calmest phases in the long lifespan of Mūsá (ﷺ). In all the other segments of his life, he appears to be unsettled and restless. Imagine how an average person would feel if after many years of teaching and coaching his people, they still spurn the key concept he was trying to put across, that is, their tossing God out of their lives and their persistent reverence of a materialistic deity that could only bring them harm; and to add insult to injury, the symbol of the calf was the religious hallmark of their slavemasters in Egypt. Now, the *āyāt* begin to shift focus, first to the tablets that are meant to contain guidelines for all who honor God by knowing His justice and appreciating His grace, and second to the final prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ).

### Israeli Tribalism Omits Muhammad (ﷺ) from Earlier Scripture

The narrative now moves on to describing what took place when Mūsá (ﷺ) was in the company of 70 individuals. The solid information from the Qur'an is that Mūsá was the one who chose 70 men to accompany him to the timely meeting with Allah (ﷻ). These men, of course, were from the Children of Israel. *Tafsīr* literature suggests that this event may have taken place on Jabal al-Ṭūr (Mt. Sinai). This is where Mūsá turned to and spoke to Allah. It is said that they fasted and purified themselves in preparation for this meeting,

And Moses chose out of his people seventy men to come [and pray for forgiveness] at a time set by Us. Then, when violent trembling seized them, he prayed, "O my Sustainer! Had You so willed, You would have destroyed them before now, and me [with them]. Will You destroy us for what the weak-minded among us have done? [All] this is but a trial from You, whereby You allow to go astray whom You will, and guide aright whom You will. You are near to us: grant us, then, forgiveness and have mercy on us — for You are the best of all forgivers! And ordain You for us what is good in this world as well as in the life to come: behold, unto You have we turned in repentance!"

[Allah] answered, "With My chastisement do I afflict whom I will, but My grace overspreads everything: and so I shall confer it on those who are on guard [of My correct measures] and systemically distribute money, and who commit themselves to Our manifestations [of power and authority] — those who shall follow the [last] Apostle, the unlettered Prophet whom they shall find described in the Torah that is with them, and [later on] in the Gospel, [the Prophet] who will put the self-evident truth into law and abolish the self-evident offense [from society], and make lawful to them the good things of life and forbid them the bad things, and lift from them their burdens and



**the shackles that were upon them [aforetime]. Those, therefore, who shall dedicate themselves to him, and honor him, and support him, and follow the light that has been bestowed from on high through him — it is they who shall be effective” (7:155–157).**

It appears that this number of men was decided upon earlier — before the deification of the calf. The selection of these particular individuals was important because they were probably the ones who were influential enough to sway the larger public opinion, and hence, convincing them of Mūsá’s veracity and accuracy would carry over to the rest of the Children of Israel. But when they approached that particular rendezvous, they said they would not share Mūsá’s faith until they saw Allah (ﷻ) with their own eyes. They demanded that if Mūsá had spoken to Him, then he should reveal God to them. At that instance, as they were importunate in pursuing their request, they were overpowered by a mountain tremor and horror-stricken.<sup>478</sup> That tremor did not end their lives. But when they realized that the “act of nature” was coinciding with their defiant attitude, they were scared and mortified. Even Mūsá (ﷺ) feared a self-generated death. He may have wept and prayed to Allah, who ultimately relieved them of the potential “natural” calamity.

The spine-chilling psychological trauma brought on by Allah’s demonstration of ultimate power was echoed by Mūsá’s invocation, **“O my Sustainer! Had You so willed, You would have destroyed them before this, and me [with them]. Do You destroy us because of what some foolish persons among us have done?”** What this suggests is that Mūsá (ﷺ) was more disposed for the divine decree to destroy them before they commenced their journey, even if that meant his own demise along with them, than for him to experience the impending punishment brought forth by their impudence. Had the 70 elders and nobles perished, it would not have been unexpected for the Israeli mindset back in the valley to accuse Mūsá of entrapping the elders and incriminate him for causing their deaths. Such an unbecoming heedless request could only have come from

those among them who were foolish and imprudent, and thus Mūsá pleaded that even though some of them may have expressed such a thing, the rest of them should not be held to suffer the consequences.

Mūsá (ﷺ) realized better than anyone else that **“...all this is but a testing trial from You”** — a way to get at a person’s inner convictions, his innocence or guilt, in a very public way. What adds even more incredulity to the event is that it occurred subsequent to their knowledge of Allah (ﷻ) having spoken to Mūsá. They had been apprised of what God had to say, and despite that, they made a request to see Him with their own eyes. And so Mūsá absolved himself from the impertinence of his people, placing the whole affair in Allah’s hands, that He may decide its outcome in any way He chose. People who display an ignorance of God or a frigid relationship with Him will eventually suffer the consequences of their choices, yet even they can expect that His own imperative of justice will never do them any wrong. Whatever accrues to them in the end, good or bad, will be merited. Likewise, He will guide and ennoble those who have a warm relationship with Him. These are the ones who would have cultivated a long-standing and enduring commitment with Him; they will not be slighted for their lifelong attachment and devotion. And once again the consequences of their fervent and fruitful deeds will match the magnitude thereof. One and the same event may cause some people to approach Allah while others lose sight of Him. Mūsá’s people were put to the test, **“For We have indeed tested your people after you.” (20:85).**

**“You are our manager.”** Allah (ﷻ) is the one who oversees and supervises all of what people do. He forgives and pardons them from the serious mistakes they commit. When man acknowledges his fragility and vulnerability, he is in the proper frame of mind to receive Allah’s accommodation, amnesty, and mercy — for His mercy extends to all, **“Said [He], ‘My torment I shall inflict upon whom I choose, and My mercy accommodates everything.’”**

This means that Allah’s will is absolute. The human variable within His absolute will works within its freedom of choice. Therefore, when the time comes and life has run its course, and man re-

turns to his Maker, he will encounter truth and justice on par with his worldly effort, work, and pursuit. On the Day of Accountability, Allah's will shall be attended by the exquisite scales of justice. And free of his worldly and material tug of war, man will come to realize that justice, the prominent feature of Allah's will, cannot be evaded or denied. Over and above that, Allah's mercy and clemency nonetheless encompass everything. Should there be the slightest ground for expending that mercy, it will be done. Thus, the expression of either Allah's justice or mercy is not done randomly or indiscriminately.

After acquainting Mūsá (ﷺ) with this fact, Allah rolls out a glimpse of the future, giving man access to the final human effort for Allah (ﷻ) that will merit His mercy and reprieve. Allah's mercy is much more expansive than the endless universe that has dazzled the thoughts and wonderstruck the imagination of man,

**I will assign it [My mercy] to those who are [actively] avoiding [My corrective power] and institute charity, and those who are committed to Our [power] manifestations — those who follow the Messenger, the preliterate Prophet whom they find cited in the Torah that is with them and [later on] in the Gospel, who orders them to constitute what is self-evidently right and bans from engaging in what is self-evidently wrong, who permits them to partake of the wholesome things [in life] and disallows them the noxious things [in life], and who relieves them of the [prior self-inflicted] restrictions and burdens they carried. So those who are sure of him and support him and give aid to him and follow the light that descended upon him — they are the onward ones (7:156–157).**

For all people of previous scripture as well as confidence-lacking Muslims, this content is very significant indeed. The Children of Israel did in fact receive the conclusive news of the coming of an untaught prophet. This information came to them via the

Prophets Mūsá and ‘Īsá, some centuries before the time of Muhammad (ﷺ). They had incontrovertible scriptural evidence of his appearance, and they were informed of his persona, his features, as well as the nature of his message, along with a sketch of those who will become his constituency. The divine words to the Children of Israel describe Muhammad (ﷺ) as *al-nabī al-ummī* (the prophet from a people who had no scripture) prior to his receiving revelation from Allah (ﷻ). This means that the anticipated prophet would not hail from the scriptural communities of Jews and Christians of that time.

He is described as one who will have the power to construct what is self-evidently right and deconstruct what is self-evidently wrong. He will alleviate the cumulative restrictions and burdens that the Children of Israel had induced upon themselves throughout their breakaway history with God over the ages. The extra-judicial restrictions levied on the Children of Israel from on high came about because of their halfhearted observance of the covenant. This up-and-coming prophet would be in a position to bring them back to a state of “religious, legal, and social” normalcy, provided that they would believe in him and follow him. The devotees of this Prophet are described as being ever so conscious of Allah’s power presence, able to systematically regulate the distribution of their wealth, and firmly committed to Him. The Children of Israel were given irrefutable information to the effect that those who will follow, aid, and support this Prophet, and see the light that comes with him, will be onwardly successful.

Breaking this news early on to Mūsá (ﷺ) and his people was a harbinger of things to come. Per this information, Banū Isrā’īl now knew how and with whom the future will be unfolding. These informed Israelis, thus, had no excuse to turn away from Muhammad (ﷺ) once he arrived. That Mūsá and the 70 individuals, when they all went to meet with the Almighty, were alerted to the mission of the Arab Prophet of Allah demonstrates how indictable and felonious these Israelis were once the latter had arrived on the scene in Arabia with the *dīn* of Allah. One would think that these scripturally educated Israelis would have been the first to accept this “new start” with Allah (ﷻ) — but history registers otherwise.

Thus, when the Israelis in Arabia rejected and objected to Muhammad (ﷺ) they did so with foreknowledge of who Muhammad really is. Despite scriptural evidence of his advent, they nonetheless dug in their heels into a solid position of opposition and obstruction. History is replete with evidence that these scripturally “enlightened” Israelis were among the bitterest enemies of the Prophet Muhammad and the *dīn* of Islam. Zionism seems to have been an early character trait of the anti-Islamic Yahūd, just as imperialism had been with the anti-Islamic Naṣārā. Their all-out war against this Prophet and this *dīn* as well as his followers has always been malicious, vindictive, mean-spirited, and virulent. Contrary to all the propaganda rubbish that comes out of Zionist and imperialist mass media it is they who have been and still are the fabricators of tension and instigators of hostilities.

In order to get a handle on the depth of their animus toward vanguard Muslims, one needs to go no further than to review the enduring war by Zionists and the waging of armed conflict by imperialists who shelter themselves within Judaism and Christianity. A thoughtful reconsideration of the Qur’anic words and lessons about them in the preceding *sūrah*s — *al-Baqarah*, *Āl ‘Imrān*, *al-Nisā’*, and *al-Mā'idah* — will reinforce the understanding of how vehement and wide-ranging this war is. Today, they show no signs of relenting or even pausing.

Ever since Islam became a *dīn* with its leadership, power base, and governance in Madinah, no one has exceeded them in their unscrupulousness and venom as they have waged wars of words and weapons against covenant Muslims and committed Muslims. Nothing seems to satisfy them. They want to exterminate an independent and self-governing Islam from existence. True to their nature, Zionism and imperialism have used and will use every instrument and any means to try to abort Islamic self-determination. In the contemporary world, these power-mongers are placing their spies and cameras inside Muslim *masjids* — from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām in Makkah to the local *masjid* on Main Street. Imagine how “Jews” and “Christians” would react if a global Muslim superpower was behind a policy of placing cameras and spies inside synagogues and

churches, all the way from the Vatican and Tel Aviv to the local place of worship in their neighborhood.

Anyone who believes there is no anti-Islamic fervor brewing in different denominations within today's Judaism and Christianity was probably born yesterday. Even though these Zionists in Jewish skin and imperialists in Christian skin have their military bases inside Islamic holy lands and their surveillance cameras inside Islamic holy houses, while the committed Muslims do not have one base or one camera inside anyone's homelands or temples, it is the Muslims who are presented as offenders and criminals by the worldwide media. The Zionist-imperialist coalition just two generations ago had virtually written off Islamic self-determination altogether. It was signing agreements and building military alliances with a mind convinced that Islam had been finished for good. Now it has woken up to its endemic, historical nightmare of an ascending Islam, thereby its half-crazed and manic-depressive assault on anything remotely Islamic.

At a time when imperialism and Zionism are beating the Muslim world to a pulp, after having successfully claimed Christianity and Judaism for all practical purposes, dilettante Muslims are still calling for and anxiously awaiting interfaith encounters with the religious agents of imperialism and Zionism, that is, officially acceptable "Christians" and "Jews." Birds of a feather flock together. It should come as no surprise that officially sponsored "Islamic" clergymen and academicians sit down at the same conference with their "Christian" and "Jewish" counterparts, discussing how "monotheistic" everyone is, how they all worship One God, and how they are all brothers and sisters.

The new trend now is to seek out "moderate Muslims" and recruit them for a brewing encounter with Muslim extremists and fundamentalists. This grand assembly of interfaith instruments (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) purportedly extols its common Abrahamic origins while its individual members are all in one sense or another, to one degree or the other, the useful extensions of an imperialist-Zionist worldwide policy to dismember the potential of an Ummah and to terminate Islamic self-determination before completion.

The tribal “us against them” attitude of historical and current Zionist exceptionalism can easily omit the name and description of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from earlier scripture. And this same type of tribal fanaticism can go on to downgrade the followers of Muhammad as lesser humans who may be murdered, mowed down, and massacred at will. To do this in our contemporary times, these Israeli racists know that they need some type of “moral argument” to move forward with their obliteration campaign of Palestinians — and if need be, all Arabs; and beyond that, all Muslims. The worldwide mainstream media of the Zionists and imperialists is smart to portray Israel as a besieged enclave of threatened Jews who came from all corners of the world to huddle in their ancient homeland. On the other side, the same media, never tires of telling the blood curdling stories of those Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims who are to their instinctual and intellectual core terrorists and fanatics. The running spin always has Israel fighting in self-defense, while its opponents are bloodthirsty savages and, well, Philistines.

Those who hide God’s words from the public, those who throw out verses pertaining to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from scripture, and those who are known to be killers of prophets will have no second thoughts or afterthoughts about turning the facts of the real world today upside down. Truth be told, it is Zionist Israel that has fomented terror in the Holy Lands since its blood-stained birth. Relying on British records, the *Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem* has registered more than 500 distinct violent or terrorist events against the Palestinians and the British colonization between 1939 and 1948. These would include assassinations of police and British officials, bank robberies, bombings, booby traps and land mines, kidnapping and torture of prisoners, and outright killing of Arabs.<sup>479</sup> The ghastly figures of these gruesome acts were not just some out-of-control Jews, rather they were the founders and executors of that Zionist monstrosity and cancer in the Holy Land, namely David Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, and Ariel Sharon.<sup>480</sup> Lest the Muslims confuse Jews with Zionists, below is a short list of these macabre Zionist atrocities from 1944 to the present,

1. *Assassination of Lord Moyne (11-6-1944)* – under orders from Yitzhak Shamir, terrorists of the Stern Gang shot and killed Lord Moyne, British resident minister; the purpose was to drive the British out of Palestine.
2. *King David Hotel massacre (7-22-1946)* – Menachem Begin's Irgun terrorists, with encouragement from Ben-Gurion's Haganah, blew up the King David Hotel in al-Quds (Jerusalem), murdering 92; their purpose was to destroy British records proving that the highest members of the Zionist government backed anti-British terrorism.<sup>481</sup>
3. *British sergeants hanged (7-12-1947)* – Begin, Shamir, and Haganah authorized the kidnapping and hanging of two British sergeants, booby-trapping their bodies, and mining the area. During this time Shamir sent many letter- and package-bombs to British officials. The year 1947 also included multiple cases of kidnapping (including brutal floggings of British soldiers) by Jewish/Zionist terrorists.
4. *Semiramis Hotel massacre (1-5-1948)* – Jewish Agency leader David Ben-Gurion and Haganah leaders blew up the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 20 and wounding 17; the purpose was to terrorize Arabs into fleeing Palestine.<sup>482</sup>
5. *Dayr Yāsīn massacre (4-9-1948)* – Begin's Irgun soldiers killed 250 sleeping Arab villagers at Dayr Yāsīn, a suburb of al-Quds (Jerusalem). Twenty-five pregnant women were bayoneted in their abdomens while still alive. Fifty children were maimed under the eyes of their mothers and then slain, their heads cut off. Menachem Begin, the leader of the Irgun gang (later to become prime minister), himself admitted on December 28, 1950 in a press interview in New York, that the Dayr Yāsīn slaughter had been carried out in accordance with an agreement between the Irgun on the one hand and the Jewish Agency and Haganah on the other hand. Begin was always proud of what he had done, considering Dayr Yāsīn a legitimate military target.<sup>483</sup>

Irgun trucks drove throughout Judea, announcing by loudspeaker to hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Chris-



tians that unless they fled Israel they would meet the same fate. Dayr Yāsīn and subsequent terrorist acts precipitated the ethnic cleansing of more than 800,000 Palestinian Muslims and Christians from the Holy Land. In town after town, Zionist soldiers drove Palestinians out, usually killing any person who delayed or attempted to take any possessions with him. Arab towns were bulldozed, replaced by Jewish communities. Begin commented on the level of Palestinian terror generated by Irgun's massacre at Dayr Yāsīn, "Out of evil, however, good came. This Arab propaganda spread a legend of terror amongst Arabs and Arab troops, who were seized with panic at the mention of Irgun soldiers. The legend was worth a dozen battalions to the forces of Israel." Israel exiled these unfortunates to virtual concentration camps in Lebanon, the West Bank, and Ghazzah (Gaza), refusing to allow them re-possession of their land and property or adequate compensation. This was the seminal cause of international Arab "terrorism" and the Mideast conflict that rages on today.<sup>484</sup>

6. *Israeli/Zionist assassination of United Nations mediator Count Folke Bernadotte (9-17-1948)* – his killing by the Stern gang was on orders of Yitzhak Shamir; the purpose was to sabotage UN efforts to create a Palestinian state.<sup>485</sup>
7. *Massacre at al-Dawāyimaḥ (10-29-1948)* – Israeli shock troops killed 80–100 men, women, and children in al-Dawāyimaḥ, a suburb of Haifa; the purpose was to intensify the terror generated by Dayr Yāsīn and compel the remaining Palestinians to leave Israel.<sup>486</sup>
8. *Massacre at Qibyaḥ (10-14-1953)* – in an atrocity condoned by the highest levels of the Israeli government and military, Ariel Sharon led 700 crack paratroopers to attack the Jordanian town of Qibyaḥ. They slaughtered 75 innocent men, women, and children primarily by locking families in their homes and blowing them up; the purpose was collective punishment to avenge the alleged killing of a single Jewish family.<sup>487</sup>
9. *Massacre of Kafr Qāsim (10-29-1956)* – fifty-one men, women, and children were murdered by Israeli troops as they returned

to their villages in the evening after work, 13 more were severely wounded by the gunfire; the purpose was to terrorize Palestinians into not siding with Egypt in case of war.<sup>488</sup>

10. *Israeli massacre of the USS Liberty (6-8-1967)* – Israel’s jet fighters and torpedo boats repeatedly attempted to sink the United States intelligence monitoring vessel, USS Liberty, during the 1967 Israel-Arabian war. The Israelis killed 34 and wounded 171 American sailors. Then Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan ordered the attack ostensibly to protect Israel’s intelligence communications, even though the war was virtually over; also declassified US intelligence indicates that the USS Liberty was bombed because Israel knew it had information about Israel being the aggressor in the war.<sup>489</sup>
11. *Israel shooting down a Libyan airliner (2-21-1973)* – straying over Israeli-controlled Sinai air space, a Libyan commercial Boeing 727 airliner was intercepted by Israeli fighters and, despite the clearest identification, shot down, killing 106 on board; the purpose was to flex Zionist power against Libya.<sup>490</sup>
12. *Israeli supervised massacre at Ṣabrā and Shātīlā refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon (9-23-1982)* – General “kill them all” Sharon and Yitzhak Shamir, in cooperation with “Christian” Phalangist forces sealed all exits and provided aerial flares, illuminating the slaughter of up to 2,750 men, women, and children, according to a body count by the committee of the Red Cross; the purpose was collective punishment of Palestinians.

This somewhat extended excursion into the criminal and sinful history of these Israelis explains, at least partially, Allah’s response to that earlier generation with Mūsá (ﷺ) when they asked Him to give them the benefit of this world and the next, **“With My torment I afflict whom I will...”** Unlike others, Israelis have to be reminded of Allah’s chastisement and affliction before they are acquainted with His mercy and grace. Allah (ﷻ) broke the good news of a future prophet who will come to these Israelis and all other people; however, instead of receiving him as a prophet they spun their whole life and history — in particular, their omission of

scripture or whatever was left of it — to justify an ideology and a religion that cleared the way for a terrorist state called “Israel.”

**Previous Scriptures Herald the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ)**  
 Before trailing the tortuous rampage of these murdering Israelis, consider the *āyah* that appears in the midst of this narrative,

Say [O Muhammad], “O mankind! Verily, I am an apostle of Allah to all of you, [sent by Him] unto whom the dominion over the heavens and the earth belongs! There is no deity/authority save Him; He [alone] grants life and deals death!” Commit, then, to Allah and His Apostle — the unlettered Prophet who is committed to Allah and His words — and follow him, so that you might find guidance! (7:158).

This is saying that the Qur’an is the last of Allah’s scriptural dispensations to mankind. And because it is the last one, it is all-encompassing, accessible, and inclusive. Islam is not the exclusive possession of a race or a generation. Previous scriptures may have had “local” or “transitional” properties. Not this one. The heralding of Islam and the Prophet (ﷺ) is a recognition of humanity’s oneness. Herein, the Prophet announces that he was sent to all ethnicities, every race, and any population until the end of this world. This Prophet addresses our common humanity, “Say [O Muhammad] to all humanity, ‘I am Allah’s Messenger to you all.’”

Note that this *āyah* was revealed in Makkah when Muhammad (ﷺ) was on the defensive, beset with controversy and conflict, and in a precarious set of circumstances. What would have been going through the minds of the Jews and Christians who were watching a beleaguered person by the name of Muhammad barely surviving the heat of his own society? No Muslim should suppose that the Jews and Christians of that generation were looking the other way, in as much as we cannot pretend that today’s “Jews” and “Christians” are looking the other way as Islamic leaders and charismatic per-

sonalities — not prophets — have to endure the social and political pressure cooker of their own societies. It was precisely in these invidious and discriminatory times that Allah (ﷻ) told His messenger to declare that he was the voice of scripture to all kin groups, folks, classes, and races.

But charity begins at home: the first to receive this call from the heavens would be the Prophet's immediate acquaintances and people, and from there the larger circle of people beyond, and then those yet further away, until this word of scripture and voice of prophet would reach the far ends of the world. But the jaded usurpers of scripture would ultimately exclude themselves from the benefit, magnanimity, and mercy that came out of the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ). However, what is perplexing is the fact that persons and establishmentarian scholars born into Islamic cultures have become the audio reverberations and voice reflections of those "Judeo-Christian" experts who give the impression that they can speak about Islam with authority.

So-called experts like Daniel Pipes and Robert Spencer mumble some Qur'anically detached statements about Islam and Muslims, which are then echoed by a person who has a Muslim name or birthplace. Keep in mind that all of this takes place in a worldwide "studio" of dominating control and influence as projected by the power structure such "experts" belong to. Imagine if Daniel Pipes and Robert Spencer, among the other "Judeo-Christian" Zionists and imperialists, belonged to a country that projects no material power, say Zambia or Guatemala? Would anyone give a hoot about what they think or say? Of course not. Let it be known that sketchy and shallow Muslims mimic these types because the latter are the megaphones of an overarching and influential power structure. And when this inferiority complex takes root into the very depth of some "Muslims," they find some measure of validation in rehashing stuff about Islam and the Prophet (ﷺ) just because it came from the dominant power structure, even if it is nonsense. Thus the follow-up from Allah (ﷻ) is timely and appropriate, **"...to whom the dominion of the heavens and earth belong, no deity/authority exists except He, He brings to life and draws to death."**<sup>491</sup>

This Prophet (ﷺ) from Arabia belongs to the world, because he was dispatched by the Sustainer of all who has possession of the heavens and the earth. Man, whether he admits it or not, remains a defective being who is subordinate to Allah (ﷻ). Life and death are a pronouncement from Allah. People have no control over initiating life or actuating death. Therefore, He merits unquestioned divinity and unparalleled authority. This is what prophets tell their people and anyone willing to listen, **“Hence, commit yourselves to Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet who is committed to Allah and His words; and follow him to be guided.”**

These *āyāt* obviously reiterate the status and station of Allah’s Prophet. His impeccable human behavior, worldly presence, and all important struggle were, in the final analysis, the actions and characteristics of a man, and hence all of what he achieved and realized can be duplicated by other men, if and only if they make the same secure commitment to Allah (ﷻ) that he did. This means that Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent so that all and sundry could acquire, attend to, and appropriate the qualities that liberate men to freely acquiesce to Allah’s authority as opposed to that of His insignificant temporal rivals. Mankind needs someone who — in person — can break new ground, carry the responsibility, and show the way. Allah’s Prophet began this task, and today there is no turning back, as more than 1,400 years of a human struggle to move the effort forward have already provided the experience to embolden our own committed efforts.

For those who are willing to see it, this *āyah* in the fuller breadth of its meaning, also indicates that the Islamic voice, which is the amplifier of the Prophet’s voice, needs to be heard by everyone in the world, in the universe, and wherever there may be intelligent life. Therefore, the Muslims are expected to be utilizing the airwaves and frequencies, the broadcast media, and the electronic media to extend the Prophet (ﷺ) to potentially untapped recipients, and to elaborate the *dīn*. It remains a pity that in some parts of the world, Muslims still have neither the technology nor the ideology necessary to make the scope of Islam and the Prophet global. A commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger requires nothing less.

Returning to what followed the tremor that overtook the 70 Israelis who were with Mūsá (ﷺ), scripture does not go into any great detail about the immediate state of affairs after Mūsá commented, **“O my Sustainer! Had You so willed, You would have destroyed them before this...”** However, it can be understood from *āyāt* in other *sūrah*s that in the wake of this “life and death” experience, Allah (ﷻ) brought them back to life after they had been shocked out of it.

**But We raised you again after you had been as dead, so that you might have cause to be grateful (2:56);**

**And then We brought them back to life: [and We did all this] so that We might mark out [to the world] which of the two points of view showed a better comprehension of the time-span during which they had remained in this state (18:12);**

**And so, [in the course of time], We brought them back to life; and they began to ask one another [as to what had happened to them]... (18:19);**

And thus these Israelis, fellow travelers with Mūsá, went safely back to their people.

Before the Qur’anic narrative goes back to the prevailing nature of these intractable Israelis, the impartial words of truth about those people reveal that not every single one of them was unruly and disobedient. The ever so careful truth is stated in the tortuous maze of their contentious attitudes and behavioral deviations,

**And among the folk of Mūsá there have been people who would guide [others] in the way of the truth and act justly in its light (7:159).**

Here, the Qur’an is advising the committed Muslims to steer clear of stereotyping an entire group of people based on the actions and

attitudes of some or most of its members, for this departs from the essential features of justice and presumed innocence that are due upon all individuals. The facts are the facts in this Book of truth, and thus all Muslims are bound by them. And the fact of the matter is that during Mūsá's time there were some Israelis who were careful of the truth and conscious to act within the conventions of justice. Even during the time of the final unlettered Prophet, some among them were mature enough to identify the truth of his prophethood and the scripture he brought when they were apprised of its quality. These were the Jews who had remained faithful to the un-revoked word of the Torah that foretold of the coming of the unlettered Apostle, the one they knew to be Muhammad (ﷺ). Included among them was the noted companion 'Abdullāh ibn Salām, who would face off with the Yahūd in Madinah reminding them of the fact that Muhammad was mentioned and foretold in the Torah as the unlettered Prophet, not to mention the similarities between the laws of Mūsá and the laws of Muhammad (ﷺ).<sup>492</sup>

### The Serial Noncompliance of Israel

The calamities that beset the Children of Israel after their tremor experience prove that this miraculous occurrence, among many others, was not enough to chasten them,

**And We divided them into twelve tribes, [or] communities. And when his people asked Moses for water, We inspired him, "Strike the rock with your staff!" — whereupon twelve springs gushed forth from it, so that all the people knew whence to drink. And We caused the clouds to comfort them with their shade, and We sent down to them *manna* and quails, [saying], "Partake of the good things We have provided for you as sustenance." And [by all their sinning] they did no harm unto Us — but [only] against their own selves did they sin (7:160).**

Even though they had denied God and revered a golden calf, and even though they asked to see Him with their naked eyes and were overtaken by a jerk and a jolt, Allah's care still enveloped Mūsá (ﷺ) and the Children of Israel. And so, Allah (ﷻ) answered Mūsá's prayer and brought them back to life. The divine will then organized them into 12 clans and communities, thereby allowing each community to trace itself back to a descendant of Prophet Ya'qūb (Isrā'īl), **"And We separated them into twelve clans-cum-communities."** And they kept track of their line of descent and parentage as tribal societies do.

Each community was allocated a personal source of water, a spring. In this manner each would have its own natural flow of ground water so as to preclude them from mutual hostilities as desert dwellers are often prone to fight over water,

**And then We revealed to Mūsá as he asked for water for his people, "Strike the rock with your cane" — out of which twelve fountains of water began gushing. Each people knew their [allotted] source of water (7:160).**

**"And We canopied them with clouds and We brought down to them *manna* and quails."** This caption places them in a picturesque setting as the clouds provide the much needed shade in the hot weather of the place and time they were in. Out of Allah's favors they were given *manna* (an edible substance similar in appearance to grain and with a taste as sweet as honey) and quails (small game birds) brought within their effortless reach. Water was a God-send, and so was the food — who could ask for more!?

All this wholesome nourishment became theirs to eat and drink, and in return they were only counseled to be observant of the Lord, the Almighty One, **"Eat of the fine food We have provided for you."** Up until this moment, nothing was forbidden to them. However, in the succession of events, as Allah (ﷻ) was showering His warmth and affection upon them, these Israelis began to become more and more recalcitrant and unpersuadable with every passing day. The last portion of this *āyah* exposes their perverse ulterior na-



ture, all the more after water burst out of the earth for them, the clouds shaded them from the Sun, and food was virtually served to them “out of heaven” as it were, **“And they did not mistreat Us, rather, they were [in the habit of] mistreating themselves.”**

Throughout their sordid history, instances and events along the way have laid bare their true character, as they willfully and stubbornly disobeyed Allah (ﷻ), trying to find any number of roundabout ways to avoid Allah’s will. But whatever and however they tried — and they tried very hard — in the end they could not offend or mistreat Allah; instead they only did that to their own selves. In terms of “loss and gain” Allah earns nothing from what people do or do not do; they are the ones who lose for disobeying Him and gain for obeying Him. And this is equally true for Banū Isrā’īl and all others.

In return for Allah’s care and compassion, the Israelis proceeded with a psychology that would go in every direction except the one leading directly to Allah (ﷻ),

**And [remember] when they were told, “Dwell in this land and eat of its food as you may desire; but say, ‘Remove You from us the burden of our sins,’ and go into the entryway meekly — [whereupon] We shall forgive you your sins [and] shall amply reward the perfecters” (7:161).**

Recall that Allah pardoned these Israelis after they were caught worshiping a golden calf, and after the collective shock and tremor on the mountain. Then He graced them with all the blessings and sustenance that came their way. But despite all of the divine clemency and leniency, they were more comfortable moving in evasive directions, in flagrant disobedience of the Almighty. In the current example, they were told to enter into a particular land, an urban center, so to speak, which the Qur’an does not identify by name. All of this land’s provisions were made accessible and delightful to them, the only proviso being that they say a specific prayer as they enter this urban center, and that they meekly cross

the threshold — in a gesture of servitude to the Almighty, as the Prophet (ﷺ) did when he entered Makkah upon liberating it. In exchange for that Allah promised to cancel their sins and add to the deeds of those who strive to perfect their works. But true to their own crooked selves, a segment of these Israelis altered the wording of the prayer, thereby disparaging the image of their moment of entry, **“But those from among them who were offensive altered what We said to them into something else.”**

At this point, Allah (ﷻ) sent down upon them a torment from the skies — the same skies that just days and months earlier were a natural umbrella and a source of sustenance. The deviation of the few brought upon the rest such misery and suffering — and this is exactly how the privileged classes of any day and age end up punishing the masses. Once again, the Qur’an does not detail the exact suffering and misery that was visited upon them as a result of their own disobedience and conniving. Suffice it to say that their break with Allah was what brought upon their own selves the consequences of their God-offending behavior. Justice took its course: pain and trouble were the result of bad behavior.

In the next example, the Israelis once again find themselves mired in noncompliance and nonconformity. This time they do not downright take issue with the divine order in its stated word, instead they try to be sneaky with the divine text as a way out. Here, they are being tested, but to learn something from the experience, the party in straitened circumstances must exhibit patience and learn fortitude. Patience here requires a human nature that has not disintegrated along the lines of lust and selfishness,

**And ask them about the town that stood by the sea: how its people would profane the Sabbath whenever their fish came to them, breaking the water’s surface, on a day on which they ought to have kept the Sabbath — because they would not come to them on other than Sabbath-days! Thus did We try them by means of their [own] iniquitous doings. And whenever a caucus among them asked [those who tried to restrain the Sabbath-**

breakers], “Why do you preach to people whom Allah is about to destroy or [at least] to chastise with suffering severe?” — they answered, “In order to be free from blame in the presence of our Sustainer, and that these [transgressors, too], might become conscious [of His power presence].”

And thereupon, when those [sinners] had forgotten all that they had been told to take to heart, We saved those who had tried to prevent the doing of evil, and overwhelmed those who had been bent on evildoing with dreadful suffering for all their degeneracy; and then, when they disdainfully persisted in doing what they had been forbidden to do, We said to them, “Be as apes despicable!” And lo! your Sustainer issued a decree that most certainly He would bestir against them until Resurrection Day people who would afflict them with cruel suffering: verily, your Sustainer is swift in retribution — yet, verily, He is [also] much-forgiving, merciful (7:163–167).

These *āyāt* cover a long stretch of time: from the time of Mūsá and the Israelis around him to the time of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Israelis in the geographical environs of Madinah.

Here, Allah (ﷻ) is instructing Muhammad (ﷺ) to ask these Israeli Yahūd about a particular well-known incident in their Israeli/Yahūdī past — a past that, according to their own claims, is a tribal, if not genetic, continuum of their peculiar history. But their ancient and enduring disobedience is less an incidental part of the narrative than an essential feature of it. This incident resulted in the virtual dehumanization of these criminals against God. It launched them into a history of inferiority and dejection through which they live a life of ostracism and exile. As for those among them who reasoned and reconciled themselves with the unlettered Prophet, they were relieved and released through Islam from their Judaic legal chains, which they brought upon themselves due to their defiant character and history of disobedience.

As in other narratives, the Qur'an does not mention the name of that seaside town, as it is not relevant to the gist of the story. The Yahūdīs who are familiar with this narrative may very well know the name of this town, and may have enough integrity to not have changed its name; however given their history, such confidence may not be well placed. The characters in this Yahūdī episode are Israelis who obviously lived near the sea. They had asked for a day in the week in which they could withdraw from earthly labor and relax — as a form of devotion to God. This exemption from livelihood activities was designated as their Sabbath. But then came a test from Allah (ﷻ) to examine their patience and abstinence from worldly attractions and greed. This was essential insofar as re-constituting the Israeli psychology and character that were damaged by an extended generational life of degradation and inferiority. Now was the time for these Israelis to outgrow their dependence on others, as well as their inferiority complex. They were going to have to withstand the challenges of life and stand on their own. Similarly, for all other covenant bearers and people of God, this step is an essential component of character building. Working God's will on earth demands strong character and the endurance and good nature that go along with it. If Allah so desires that some people lead on a worldwide scale — that they become *khulafā'* — it is necessary that they steel their will and build their character in Allah's light as they walk his course on earth.

There is really nothing new here, as man's willpower and resolve were tested in their infancy back in the days of Adam and Eve (ﷺ). The first two humans were not able to manage that trial and eventually succumbed to Satan's tempting influence, which unrealistically excited hope and expectation in a way that it was projected to fall outside the domain of God's supervision. They thought, under the influence of Satan and in accordance with what he told them, that they would live forever and have everlasting territory to rule and control. This temptation or its equivalent has been the mainstay of all peoples who carry God's covenant to see whether they are true to God or whether they will prioritize some worldly attraction or physical appeal. The forms of this test may vary but

the trial remains the litmus test of all committed Muslims before they assume the responsibilities designated from on high.

It turns out that a proportion of these Israelis could not resist the temptation on this occasion. The trial was too alluring. Even their previous history of falling out with or falling away from Allah (ﷻ) did not serve as an incentive to stay the course this time. So, on the Sabbath day, these Israelis could see the fish coming within reach — too close to resist, too easy to catch. But this was the Sabbath — the day on which they were to desist from worldly pursuits in favor of devotion to their Lord. To these Israelis — who had peripherally committed themselves to the Sabbath but were viscerally materialists, not wanting to pass up any opportunity for profit — week after week, it looked like they were missing an opportunity to take hold of and bag this weekly hunt. And this pressed their desires the more so when they realized that once the Sabbath was gone, the rest of the weekdays offered them no fishing opportunities as the Sabbath did. This dynamic was what Allah ordered His Prophet (ﷺ) to remind them of,

**And ask them [the Israelis] about the town located near the sea wherein they would corrupt the Sabbath: fish would stream toward them on the Sabbath [they were not allowed, by divine law, to catch those fish], but when it was not the Sabbath [when they were allowed to fish by divine law] there were no fish [to catch]. In this manner did We test them due to their failing character (7:163).**

The human mind may want to painstakingly pursue the interplay between man's commitment to God and fish coming close to shore to test that commitment. But the final explanation to that cannot be contained within the confines of a laboratory. What is known is that there is a relationship between man's commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and the fluctuations of nature — be they natural upheavals such as hurricanes and earthquakes, be they natural catastrophes such as a country or a society being wiped off the map, or

be they an occurrence in the fashion of fish streaming to the coast on the Sabbath and then virtually disappearing for the rest of the week. All this happens within a larger scale and a deeper reciprocal action and reaction between “man” and “nature.” There can only be pity for those hard-core “scientists” who will not believe or trust in any such phenomenon if they cannot subject it to the few laws of physics or chemistry they have on their library shelves or in their brain cells.

### **Natural Laws Do Not Contravene Scriptural Dynamics**

The world is much more complex and so far beyond man’s reach that its events and developments cannot be subjected to the facile rules and laws man has discovered through the limited scientific knowledge he has so far gained, which will remain a drop in the ocean compared to the infinite and immortal knowledge that Allah (ﷻ) has. True, there are physical and natural laws man has observed and “quantified.” But these laws were “built into” existence and life by the Almighty whose will and decree are absolute and not bound to these laws. And if man, through years of experiments and experience, observes that these natural laws are “fixed” it does not mean that they cannot be superceded or suspended by the Almighty in accordance with His knowledge, mercy, and will. Allah, who placed these laws where they are for man’s benefit, is not going to be a captive of these laws — that are willed by Him and can be willed away by Him if He so decides.

Even the events contingent upon or related to these natural laws are assessed and fulfilled by Him. These natural laws, even though they appear to be constant, routine, and fail-proof are not, in the end, automatic. The attainment and predilection of Allah (ﷻ) remain part of the “dynamics” and “mechanics” of such natural laws. Therefore when “things happen” in accordance with and in a predictable manner concordant with these natural laws or when “things happen” in conflict with and in an unpredictable manner in conflict with these natural laws, there is always the will of Allah in the kinetics of such developments and occurrences.

Thus, a “miracle” and a “mechanical” natural event are both equal insofar as Allah’s will and conclusion are concerned.

A human mind expressing an inferiority toward science and a superiority toward God places the study of matter and forces at the helm of its judgemental proclamations. Physics becomes the final word on matter, while God — who created matter and allowed it to be studied in physics — becomes questionable or even superstitious. Physics as a discernable discipline in the West began during the Renaissance, with Nicolaus Copernicus’ model of planetary motion and Galileo Galilei’s mechanics. Astronomy and mechanics continued to dominate the field, with the work of Isaac Newton, Johannes Kepler, and others; Newton and Gottfried Leibniz developed calculus, which Newton used to express his theorems of mechanics. Galileo, Newton, and Kepler all studied optics. Christiaan Huygens was the first in the West to envisage light as a wave, an idea strongly disputed by Newton. Galileo built one of the earliest telescopes, and the compound microscope was (probably) invented by Zacharias Janssen (circa 1590). Thermodynamics dates from the work of Nicolas Léonard Sadi Carnot, James Prescott Joule, and others in the 19th century. About this time, steam power was becoming important: James Watt introduced his improved steam engine in 1769, and Robert Stephenson’s “rocket,” a steam-powered railway engine, dates from 1829. Benjamin Franklin was the first to clarify the idea of electric charge; the electric battery was invented by Alessandro Volta. The foundation of modern electromagnetism was laid by André-Marie Ampère and Michael Faraday, and electric motors and dynamos were invented at this time.<sup>493</sup>

Newton’s mechanics dominated physics for two centuries, and were in part responsible for a mechanistic philosophy that attempted to explain all phenomena in terms of mechanics. The physicists’ view of the world has changed dramatically due to two major developments in the early part of the 20th (Gregorian) century. The first was Albert Einstein’s theory of special relativity, which grew in part from James Maxwell’s work in electromagnetism in the second half of the 19th century. From the special theory, Einstein went on to his general theory of relativity, a theory of gravity, which was

possible only because of mathematical developments by Riemann in the study of geometry. The second was the development of quantum theory and atomic theory by Schrödinger, Bohr, and many others. This was made possible by work in thermodynamics, electromagnetism, and the new radiations. It has led to modern solid-state physics, as well as atomic, nuclear, and particle physics. From these have developed electronics and hence computers, lasers, nuclear power, and much more.<sup>494</sup>

There is a frame of mind, molded throughout the last few centuries within Western civilization by Euro-American mainstream scientists, that deifies science and invalidates God. This mental structure refuses to acknowledge the occurrence of incidents such as this “Israeli Sabbath” event, Noah’s flood, and the parting of the sea when Moses and the Israelis were rescued from Pharaoh and his pursuing military force, as well as the many and numerous miracles that have attended human and scriptural history. It would be instructive at this point to outline this mentality and probe its “internal thoughts” with a view to gaining a better understanding of the experiential infancy at the core of this way of thinking.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Physics*, physics is

...the study of the laws that determine the structure of the universe with reference to the matter and energy of which it consists. It is concerned with the forces that exist between objects, and the interrelationship between matter and energy. Until the early-20th century, physics was divided into six diverse areas of study: heat, light, magnetism, sound, and electricity. Since then quantum mechanics and Einstein’s theory of relativity have become separate fields of inquiry.<sup>495</sup>

Modern physics also includes other subdivisions that are useful. Matter and energy are manifest in the interactions of subatomic particles and the nuclei of atoms as well as in the materials (condensed matter) that make up solids, liquids, and other forms of matter, leading to the branches of study known respectively as particle



physics, nuclear physics, and condensed-matter physics. Relativity theory also predicted the expansion of the universe, linking physics for the first time to cosmology, the study of the universe as a whole. Recently the links between physics, astronomy, and cosmology have become tighter; nuclear and particle physics are needed to explain the stars and galaxies. At the same time, physicists who study advanced concepts such as string theory, which replaces particles with strings, now look to astronomy to validate their work.<sup>496</sup> A brief history of the discipline is given below.

1. *Physics in Antiquity and the “Middle Ages”* – the ancient Greeks tried, sometimes successfully, to explain materials and motion on the basis of observation and reasoning. One plausible explanation, advocated by Democritus of Abdera (circa 470–380BCE) and others, is that all matter is composed of small particles called atoms. Their theories proposed that different atoms have different shapes and that all materials can be based on atoms of fire, air, water, and earth. Today scientists recognize that most matter is made from combinations of nearly 100 different atoms, usually joined to form larger particles called molecules. Traditionally there are 92 elements, although only 88 or so are normally found on Earth; there is hardly any astatine, francium, or protactinium, and no promethium or technetium. Some transuranic elements are manufactured in relatively large amounts, notably plutonium, americium, and californium. Neptunium, although considered artificial, may exist in greater supply on Earth than astatine, owing to some natural creation (how convenient it is to throw in the phrase *natural creation* and then continue as if there is no God). Other synthetic elements are not stable enough to be counted.<sup>497</sup>

The most complete Greek theory of physics, incorporating the ideas of earlier writers as well as his own, is that of Aristotle (384–322BCE). Most of what Aristotle thought about physics is now recognized as incorrect. Aristotle rejected atoms because any space between atoms must be empty, but he had based his theories on the idea that a vacuum cannot exist. He thought that an object in motion requires a contin-

uing force to keep it in motion. If an object is moving fast enough, he conjectured, air rushing to prevent a vacuum behind the object could provide the necessary force for a time, but that force would gradually diminish. So a thrown object could travel through the air, but eventually would drop to the ground. The object slows and falls, in Aristotle's view, because the natural place for material objects containing earth or water is toward the center of Earth.<sup>498</sup>

Aristotle remained the main influence on physics for the next 2,000 years. Although some Chinese philosophers developed ideas of motion similar to those we use today, they were unknown in the Arab/Islamic world or in Europe. Islamic scholars followed the ideas of Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, but they also advanced beyond Greek concepts in some areas of physics, notably optics (the science of light). Aristotle had believed that light travels from an object to the eye, but other influential writers of antiquity, such as Euclid (around 300BCE) and Ptolemy (circa 100–170CE), thought that light proceeds from the observer to the object. The decisive arguments in favor of Aristotle's view were made by al-Haytham (Alhazen, circa 965–1040CE) around 1020. He extended the laws of reflection from those applying to flat mirrors, which had been known to Ptolemy, to cover curved mirrors and lenses.<sup>499</sup>

In the European Middle Ages, physics began to free itself from some of Aristotle's inaccurate ideas about motion. The French philosopher Jean Buridan (circa 1295–1358) was the first to propose that a body in motion contained a mysterious inner force, called *impetus*, that maintains motion for a time. As a body moves, the impetus dissipates, especially if some force opposes the motion, speeding dissipation.<sup>500</sup>

2. *The European Scientific Revolution* – near the end of the 16th century, Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) accepted Aristotelian ideas and such modifications as impetus at first, but he soon brought a radical concept to studies of motion. Instead of trying to explain why objects move as they do, he experi-

mented and then described exactly how they move. He also used experiment to determine how forces affect objects that do not move. Although he made some errors, his basic conclusion in 1590 — that an object in motion continues to move in a straight line until stopped by a force — is still accepted. His other famous conclusion — that light bodies and heavy bodies fall through the same distance in the same amount of time — is also true. He had established it by experiment, and announced the correct mathematical law governing falling (distance increases with the square of time) in 1638.<sup>501</sup>

Other scientists continued in the same vein as Galileo during the 17th century. The German astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) advanced optics and showed in 1604 that the intensity of light diminishes as the square of the distance from its source. In 1643 the Italian physicist Evangelista Torricelli (1608–1647), with the invention of the barometer, showed that Aristotle had been wrong about the vacuum, since a vacuum forms above the mercury column in the original barometer. Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) experimented with the vacuum and with fluids, establishing that in a fluid, force is transmitted in all directions and always acts perpendicular to the surface of the container (1654, published 1662). Isaac Newton (1643–1727) experimented with breaking light into its components (1665) and reported that white light is the combination of the colored lights of the rainbow (1675).<sup>502</sup>

This period when experiments began to dominate physics is known as the scientific revolution. It culminated in 1687 with the publication of Newton's *Principia*. Newton improved on Galileo's laws of motion and combined them with a mathematical law of gravity. The combination was sufficient to explain not only the motions of objects on Earth, but also the motions of the heavenly bodies (the Law of Gravity and Newton's Laws of Motion). Newton (and independently Leibniz) had also invented a new mathematical tool: calculus. Throughout the 18th century, Newtonian physics and calculus were combined to develop systematically a wide range of topics in

physics, ranging from acoustics to detailed orbits of the planets. Some scientists believed that if the exact position and momentum of every point in space were known, the future of the universe could be predicted exactly as well.<sup>503</sup>

3. *Electromagnetism* – although Newton's work explained how gravity functioned, it did not explain why material objects attract each other with this force. There were also other forces that were unexplained, and less was known of their rules. As early as 1600 William Gilbert (1544–1603) applied the experimental method to two of these forces, identifying and differentiating between magnetism and static electricity. A hundred years later, scientists began to tease from nature the secrets of these forces. Weak electric charges were made by rubbing glass tubes with silk or by similar means at first. In 1729 another English experimenter, Stephen Gray (1666–1736), was the first to recognize that these weak charges could travel from one material to another through substances that were later called conductors. He soon showed that when conductors do not carry away the charge, almost anything — even a human being — could be charged with electricity. A French experimenter, Charles du Fay (1698–1739), was the first to recognize that there are two kinds of charge and that like charges repel, whereas different charges attract each other (1733).<sup>504</sup>

The English and French experimenters and their assistants also began to build up charges strong enough to produce the first recognized shocks. In 1746 the invention of the way to store static electricity (called a Leiden jar after the site of its discovery) permitted experiments with much more powerful charges. In 1751, Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) connected the small shocks from Leiden jars with the powerful shock of lightning, proving his theory by flying a kite in a thunderstorm and conducting the charge down the wet string. In 1769 a Scottish scientist, John Robison (1739–1805), showed that the repulsive force caused by charge obeys an inverse-square law like the law for loss of intensity of light over distance.<sup>505</sup>

A new source of electric charge began to be developed in Italy during the 1770s and 1780s when Luigi Galvani (1737–1798) investigated charge produced in the muscles of animals, which Alessandro Volta (1745–1827) recognized as the result of chemical interactions. Volta in 1800 built a chemical device (similar to a modern automobile battery) that produced the first current electricity.<sup>506</sup>

Meanwhile a parallel set of experiments with magnets began in 1749 when the English experimenters John Canton (1718–1772) and John Michell (1724–1793) developed stronger magnets than occur in nature. Michell immediately used his magnets to derive the mathematical laws of attraction and repulsion. In 1751, Benjamin Franklin showed that electric charge can produce magnetism. In 1785 the French physicist Charles Coulomb (1736–1806) carefully measured both electric and magnetic forces and also found that both obey exactly the same inverse-square laws. As early as 1807 the Danish physicist Hans Christian Oersted (1777–1851) began to search for a deeper connection between electricity and magnetism, which he found in 1820 when he observed that an electric current affects a magnetized needle. The recognition that electricity and magnetism are closely connected quickly led to the discovery of the laws governing electromagnetism as well as to devices that combined the two forces to produce motion (electric motors), powerful electric currents (generators, or dynamos), and powerful electromagnets.<sup>507</sup>

4. *Light* – at the same time as charge and magnetism were being analyzed, there were apparently unrelated studies concerning light. As early as 1678, the Dutch physicist Christiaan Huygens (1625–1695) had proposed a theory of light based on waves. But in 1704 Newton published *Opticks*, which summarized his view that light consists of small particles. About a hundred years later the study of light experienced several rapid advances. In 1800 and 1801 two forms of invisible light were discovered: infrared by William Herschel (1738–1822) and ultraviolet by Johann Ritter (1776–1810). Also in 1801,

the English scientist Thomas Young (1773–1829) conducted experiments that convinced scientists everywhere that light must be a wave phenomenon, a view reinforced in 1808 when the French physicist Etienne Malus (1775–1812) discovered polarized light, a form of light in which waves are confined to a plane.<sup>508</sup>

It was already known that electric charge could in some circumstances produce light (in lightning, for example). In 1839 the French physicist Edmond Becquerel (1820–1891) determined that the opposite also occurs in some circumstance; light produces electric current, known as the photovoltaic effect. A few years later Michael Faraday (1791–1867) showed that a magnetic field changes the polarization of light (1845). With these discoveries in mind James Clerk Maxwell (1831–1879) concluded that light consists of waves incorporating both electricity and magnetism — that is, electromagnetic waves. He predicted that electromagnetic waves exist in the electromagnetic spectrum below infrared and above ultraviolet radiation. In 1873 Maxwell published a complete mathematical theory of electromagnetism.<sup>509</sup>

There were still mysteries. While setting up the equipment to produce and detect radio waves (the long electromagnetic waves predicted by Maxwell) in 1887, the German physicist Heinrich Hertz (1857–1894) observed that light shining on the apparatus affects the size of an electric spark. Further investigation with more energetic electromagnetic radiation revealed that the amount of charge released by the metal depends on the frequency rather than the intensity of the radiation, a finding which made no sense at first. The problem was resolved in 1905 when Albert Einstein (1879–1955) proved that light, as Newton had proposed, behaves in this case as a particle instead of as a wave.<sup>510</sup>

5. *Heat* – as early as 1724 scientists tried to explain heat and cold with the idea that heat is an unusual component of matter, similar to a liquid, which they called *caloric*. Caloric persisted throughout the 18th century until a decisive experiment

by Benjamin Thompson (Count Rumford, 1753–1814) showed that heat is closely connected to motion. Scientists since have believed heat to be an effect of the motion of molecules in any substance (cold is simply the absence of heat, or slower molecular motions), but it was not until 1860 that Maxwell and, independently, the Austrian physicist Ludwig Boltzmann (1844–1906) worked out the mathematical theory of such particles.<sup>511</sup>

Meanwhile, physicists were discovering the general laws of heat. The French physicist Sadi Carnot (1796–1832), after studying the still new steam engines, established mathematically in 1824 that work is done as heat passes from a high temperature to a lower one and that the maximum amount of work possible depends only on the temperature. Heat was recognized as a form of energy, along with motion, electricity, light, and stored (or potential) energy. Several English and German physicists measured exactly the amount of heat produced by motion, work that led to the laws of thermodynamics (“movement of heat”). With the new understanding of heat the British physicist William Thomson (Baron Kelvin, 1824–1907) recognized in 1851 that the total absence of heat would produce a specific coldest temperature, absolute zero.<sup>512</sup>

Experimentalists used various methods to lower temperatures nearly to absolute zero, liquefying air in 1878, hydrogen in 1895, and helium — the element that has the coldest known transition from a gas to a liquid — in 1908. With liquid helium near absolute zero, strange new forms of matter could be created. One of the most important is matter that superconducts — an electric current started in a ring of superconducting material will continue around the ring as long as the temperature is maintained at a few degrees above absolute zero. Since the Dutch physicist Heike Kamerlingh-Onnes (1853–1926) discovered the first form of superconductivity in 1911, other materials, called high-temperature superconductors, have been found (starting in 1986), although none are superconducting at temperatures above  $-200$  °F ( $-130$  °C). Liquid helium itself

was found to have unusual properties similar to those of superconductors, such as superfluidity. Like some very cold gases, first produced in 1995, liquid helium is a Bose-Einstein condensate (BEC), matter in which the atoms merge into a single superatom, first predicted by Albert Einstein in 1924.<sup>513</sup>

6. *Relativity* – Maxwell’s theory of electromagnetism (proposed in 1873) assumed that electromagnetic waves must be motions in some all-pervasive but undetectable substance, which was called *ether*. Various attempts were made to define the properties of ether and, in a famous failed experiment of 1888, to determine Earth’s motion through the ether. The Polish-American physicist Albert Michelson (1852–1931) and the American physicist Edward Morley (1838–1923) used a sensitive device invented by Michelson to measure the speed of light in the direction of Earth’s motion through space and perpendicular to that motion, but failed to find any difference, suggesting that ether was a flawed concept. When Einstein developed the special theory of relativity (1905), however, he concluded that electromagnetic waves do not need ether to explain their properties. He postulated that light travels through a vacuum at the same speed under all conditions; thus one cannot determine how the Earth is moving by looking for variations in the speed of light that such motion would cause. He also observed that physical laws as measured should be the same for two entities moving with respect to each other with no change in velocity. From these ideas he concluded that the universe can be described in terms of four-dimensional space-time and that matter and energy are related by the famous equation,  $E=mc^2$ , where  $E$  is energy,  $m$  is mass, and  $c$  is the speed of light in a vacuum. Relativity theory also showed that time can be viewed as a dimension related to the dimensions of space. A definition of modern physics, then, might be that it is the study of matter-energy in space-time.<sup>514</sup>

Next Einstein considered what happens if one entity is accelerated with relation to the other. He based this theory, the general theory of relativity, on the idea that no test can



determine a difference between gravitational force and the force produced by acceleration, called inertia. The general theory of relativity, which resulted from this postulate in 1915, is a description of gravity in terms of the curvature of space-time. Einstein's theory explained previously observed, but unexplained, changes in the orbit of Mercury, and in 1919 described how light from a star was bent by the Sun's gravitational field. Almost as soon as the general theory was published, it became clear that the theory as originally formulated predicted an expanding universe and also predicted the existence of what we now call black holes (1917), stars that have collapsed into points with such a strong gravitational force that light cannot escape. In 1979 another effect predicted by the theory, the lensing effect caused by the gravitational force of an entire galaxy, was observed for the first time; since then, gravitational lenses have become one of the principal tools astronomers use to observe the early universe.<sup>515</sup>

Einstein thought in 1917 that the universe should be static, but assumed that gravity would cause the universe to be contracting. He interpreted his original equations as showing a universe that is slowly collapsing. To resolve this, he added a "cosmological constant" to the equations for general relativity to provide a small force opposing gravity. Einstein was clearly wrong about the possibility of gravitational collapse, for the Dutch physicist Willem de Sitter (1872–1934) showed in 1919 that Einstein's equations without the cosmological constant actually predicted an expanding universe. When expansion of the universe was observed by astronomers in the 1920s, Einstein abandoned the cosmological constant. In recent years, however, astronomers have detected an acceleration of the expansion of the universe. The mysterious force that causes this expansion is called "dark energy." Some physicists regard dark energy to be evidence suggesting that Einstein's cosmological constant was correct and should be reinstated.<sup>516</sup>

7. *Particles and Quantum Theory* – several Greek and Roman writers had a theory that matter is made from small, indivisible

particles; this theory was revived in 1803 as atomic theory by the British chemist John Dalton (1766–1844). During the 19th century, the idea of indivisible atoms came to be accepted, but near the end of the century evidence emerged that atoms themselves are made from even smaller particles. The electron was discovered by the English physicist Joseph John Thomson (1856–1940) in 1897 and measured to be smaller by far than the smallest atom. Two years later, Thomson showed that the electron is a part of the atom.<sup>517</sup>

Because electrons have a negative charge, but atoms are electrically neutral, it was apparent that there must be some particle (or other entity) in the atom with a positive charge to neutralize the charge of the electron. By 1911 the New Zealand-born British physicist Ernest Rutherford (1871–1937) had established that the positive charge is carried by a particle much heavier than the electron; he named this new particle the proton. The Danish physicist Niels Bohr (1885–1962) developed the mathematical theory of hydrogen, which has the simplest atom, in 1913. He found that the theory was correct in terms of experiment only if he used the idea that electrons can travel in only a few orbits and that they must be able to change from one orbit to another instantly (giving off or absorbing light in the process).<sup>518</sup>

The idea that light energy has only separate (discrete) levels had first been used in 1900 to explain the spectrum of light emitted as a body is heated. The discrete levels were called quanta by the German physicist Max Planck (1858–1947), who had developed this theory. In 1905, Einstein used the same idea to explain the phenomenon discovered by Hertz in 1887, showing that light behaves like particles (quanta of light). Bohr showed that electron orbits are also quanta. Thus the theory of particle behavior is called *quantum theory*.<sup>519</sup>

Quantum theory advanced rapidly in the 1920s, beginning with the idea of the French physicist Louis de Broglie (1892–1987) that particles such as the electron have a wave aspect. The following year the Pauli exclusion principle (refer-

ring to the Two Basic Laws of Quantum Physics) and the matrix theory of the electron were established, along with the concept of particle spin. In 1926 the German physicist Erwin Schrödinger (1887–1961) developed the equation of the electron wave. In 1927 the Heisenberg uncertainty principle was introduced. During this period, the only known particles were the photon, electron, and proton, but in 1930 Wolfgang Pauli (1900–1958) proposed the neutrino, which was followed by dozens of other particles (subatomic particles). Quantum theory was cast into the more precise form called quantum electrodynamics in 1947, when several physicists developed mathematical techniques to resolve problems with the original quantum theory.<sup>520</sup>

8. *Nuclear Physics* – radioactivity, which was discovered in 1896 by the French physicist Henry Becquerel (1852–1908), was the key to discovery of the proton and the concept that each atom has a positive nucleus surrounded by negative electrons. The study of the nucleus could not advance much until the discovery, in 1932, of the neutral particle the neutron, which is part of the nucleus in all atoms but the simplest hydrogen atom. Different forms of the same element, called isotopes, have the same number of protons in the nucleus, but different numbers of neutrons.<sup>521</sup>

The French wife-and-husband team Irene Joliot-Curie (1897–1956) and Frederic Joliot-Curie (1900–58) showed in 1934 that an element can be changed to a radioactive isotope by bombarding the atoms with neutrons. In 1937 the Italian-American physicist Emilio Segrè (1905–1989) used the same idea to produce a previously unknown artificial element, technetium. In 1940 the first artificial element with an atomic number higher than that of uranium was created and named neptunium, element 93. The following year element 94, plutonium, joined the list. Today there are artificial elements through element 116.<sup>522</sup>

In 1938 the German physicist Otto Hahn (1879–1968) and the Austrian physicist Lise Meitner (1878–1968) discov-

ered that the large uranium atom could break into pieces (fission) when struck with a neutron, releasing additional neutrons and other forms of energy in the process. This discovery led to the atomic, or nuclear fission, bomb and nuclear power. Also in 1938 two physicists, Hans Bethe (1906–2005) and Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (1912–2007), proposed that in the intense heat and pressure of the interior of a star, hydrogen nuclei combine with each other to form helium (fusion), releasing energy in the process. This process also led to the development of a fusion bomb (the hydrogen bomb, 1952).<sup>523</sup>

In the last decades of the 20th century physicists developed the standard model of elementary particles. This model incorporates three of the four fundamental forces in nature: the strong and weak nuclear forces and electromagnetic force (the other force is gravity). In the model, bosons mediate the forces: gluon, for the strong nuclear force; the photon for electromagnetism; and W and Z particles for the weak nuclear force. Within this model, the weak and electromagnetic forces have been combined into electroweak theory. The standard model has thus far met all experimental challenges, but it has some gaps in addition to the omission of gravity: in particular, the strong and electroweak forces are called grand unified theories (GUTs). Beyond grand unified theories, a great challenge for physicists is a “theory of everything” (TOE) that would account for all the fundamental forces in nature.<sup>524</sup>

9. *Condensed Matter* – nuclear and particle physics apply to what occurs within atoms and in isolated subatomic particles but do not explain the behavior of surface interactions, of clusters of small numbers of atoms or molecules, of complex molecular structures such as colloidal solutions or foams, or of electromagnetic phenomena in solids or liquids. Physicists have come to refer to the branch of the science that is concerned with the collective behavior of many particles as “condensed matter” physics. Today condensed-matter physics is one of the most active areas of this science. Although scientific studies of magnetism and static electricity began in 1600, the first ac-

curate theory of the cause of magnetism was that of the French physicist André-Marie Ampère (1775–1836) in 1825. Michael Faraday (1791–1867) recognized in 1845 that there are several magnetic effects, including diamagnetism (opposition to a magnetic field), paramagnetism (which disappears when a magnetic field is removed), and ferromagnetism (the familiar “permanent” magnetism that can be induced in iron and some other metals). Another major advance occurred in 1907 when the French physicist Pierre-Ernest Weiss (1865–1940) explained ferromagnetism as the effect produced when many small regions, called domains, become aligned by a magnetic field.<sup>525</sup>

Early experimenters with static electricity observed that some substances — notably metals — conduct electricity and others are insulators. But not until 1900 did the German physicist Paul Drude (1863–1906) establish that in conductors some electrons are free to move away from their atoms, carrying negative charge with them. When quantum theory was developed, the Russian-German physicist Arnold Sommerfeld (1868–1951) developed in detail the theory of how electrons behave in a conductor. But there were still mysteries unsolved, for superconductivity was not explained until 1957, and high-temperature superconductivity still lacks a satisfactory explanation.<sup>526</sup>

Understanding how conductors and insulators work led to a better understanding of semiconductors. This provided the background for the development in 1947 of the transistor and for subsequent applications of semiconductors, including some types of lasers and light-emitting diodes. Today condensed-matter physicists are applying the concept of spin to produce the effective disk drives in modern computers and look forward to using the electronics of spin, called spintronics, to develop improved devices that accomplish the tasks of transistors and their variants better and faster.<sup>527</sup>

10. *Physics and Other Disciplines* – physics is a fundamental underpinning of most science other than the studies of human

beings and some theories concerning living organisms, and sometimes physics becomes completely combined with parts of other sciences. Three notable examples are combinations of physics with astronomy, earth science, and biology.<sup>528</sup>

Astrophysics is the study of stars, gas clouds, and other astronomical bodies, based on the application of the laws of physics, including energy production, composition, and evolution. While a broad view of astrophysics would include virtually all of astronomy, the discipline was originally concerned primarily with energy production and the development of stars from gas clouds through several stages such as red giants or white dwarfs to concluding explosions as supernovas or collapse into burned-out cinders or black holes. In recent years, the evolution of the universe as a whole (cosmology) has become a central locus of many astrophysicists; cosmology includes the development of subatomic particles in the early universe and the possible roles of subatomic particles and physical forces in such concepts as dark matter or the unknown energy that is accelerating the expansion of the universe.<sup>529</sup>

Geophysics is the study of the structure of the Earth based on the application of physical laws to Earth's shape, seismology, electromagnetic properties, oceans, and atmosphere. The methods of geophysics have revealed Earth's layered structure, consisting of inner and outer cores, mantle, and crust, and have provided the theoretical basis of plate tectonics. In recent years, the definition of geophysics has been stretched to include the physical properties of planets other than Earth as well as of the satellites of planets.<sup>530</sup>

Biophysics is the study of such physical processes as transport of materials in living organisms, growth of such organisms, and their structural stability in terms of the laws of physics. Of particular concern are transport of ions across cell membranes and the mechanisms of protein folding along with the physics of such imaging techniques as CT (computed tomography), MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), and PET (positron emission tomography) scans.<sup>531</sup>

11. *String Theory and Supersymmetry* – although quantum theories of particle physics explain many phenomena and allow interactions to be calculated to a high degree of accuracy, some of the mathematics involved has been viewed as questionable. Positive and negative infinities are added in such a way that their difference nearly cancels, but leaves a tiny amount that is exactly the amount measured by experiment. Also, physicists since Einstein have hoped to develop a unified theory that would include relativity and quantum mechanics as the logical outgrowth. Several developments since 1970 have attempted to resolve the mathematics and unify the various theories. The first was string theory, which replaced the concept of particles with one-dimensional strings whose properties are mathematically tractable, but only in spaces with more than four dimensions.<sup>532</sup>

In 1974 this was joined with a theory that every particle has a partner — if one particle represents matter, then the other represents force, and vice versa. This symmetry, referred to as *supersymmetry*, called for a wide range of new particles that had not been previously observed, implying that the unobserved particles may be too massive to be created easily. Two years later the recognition that certain strings behave like the graviton, a particle predicted by general relativity theory, led to combining relativity with string theory in a theory called *supergravity*. By 1984 string theory and supersymmetry had also been combined to create superstring theory — strings instead of particles, very massive and unknown partners for every known string, and all in 10- or 11-dimensional space. The dimensions above the three known dimensions of space and the dimension of time are also unobserved and thought to be curled so tightly that they are too small to observe. In 1995 the American physicist Edward Witten (born 1951) extended the symmetric theory of supergravity to a theory in which the fundamental entities are membranes in 11-dimensional space. Variations on this concept, known as M theory or brane theory, remain the most popular concept of the underlying re-

ality of the universe, called the “theory of everything,” for today’s theoretical physicists, although these theories are hampered by the inability of experimenters to prove or disprove them.<sup>533</sup>

The scientific intellect, whose history is briefly recounted above, grounds itself in what is observable of the physical universe — where even such observation over cumulative scores of centuries does not even broach the tip of the iceberg — but this is only a miniscule aspect of existence, whose dimensions go well beyond the physical and material. However, despite it acknowledging it has discovered only a scintilla of what remains to be brought to light, this is the “intellect” that sees no validity or rational explanation for events occurring in human history such as this one in which Allah (ﷻ) describes a relationship between the Children of Israel’s commitment to God and the fish that were abundant on the Sabbath, yet scarce and hard to catch on other days of the week. With all the fantastic research, observations, experiments, and abounding theories about the smallest particles and largest stars, there is nothing in science that disproves the facts stated here in this Qur’anic scripture. Hence there is nothing in science that contradicts this happening. This means that there exists a healthy relationship, more so a synergistic relationship, between experiential knowledge and scriptural knowledge.

In this particular instance, an aspect of Israeli history concerning the community of theirs that was situated near the sea is highlighted. In relating this story, the *āyah* draws attention to the departure from God when some of these Israelis could not help themselves as they were tempted to desecrate the Sabbath by catching the fish they so desired to possess. Other than a few committed souls, the mass of them virtually dismissed their covenant with God to honor and uphold the Sabbath. Predisposed to the truculent nature they had cultivated over the centuries, they began to parse, and thereby spin, scripture so that they may be able to rationalize their work and labor pursuits for profit on the Sabbath. And once the conscience of man is fogged up by desires and greed



anything goes. This dubious psychology can wiggle its way between the letter and spirit of scripture so as to make it appear that one is obeying God when he is really disobeying Him.

The spirit of scripture is not meant to be caged by the letter of scripture. God's law was not sent down to apply to the physical self or the material world alone. There can be no standing law in the world once human ambition decides to subvert and evade that law. Even if all the militaries of the world were commissioned to maintain "law and order," they would be handcuffed if the human beings themselves were set on abandoning or circumventing "law and order." No government in the world has the resources to assign to each one of its citizens a policeman or a soldier to enforce the law — even so, who would then be the police's police and the soldier's soldier? That is why the authority and power of Allah (ﷻ) in man's heart and mind are prerequisites for this "law and order."

All legal systems that do not have a reservoir of good faith and goodwill in their populations become nothing more than authoritarian regimes and police states. And all legal systems that are not heavenly issued are bound to fail, sooner or later. This Israeli historical context of fishing on the Sabbath provides an example of a people who wanted to remain on good terms with God while trying to outwit His law. This means that His law was not engraved on their hearts, it was not settled in their spirits; hence their chicanery and duplicity.

Thus, even God's physical laws will fail if they are not attended by a faith contribution or covenant asset. How, then, would man-made laws that are not bolstered by human faith measure up; and even if they were buoyed up by human faith, would they work and for how long, when they are manipulated by man, executed through his deficit knowledge, and devised through a shortfall in transcendency? This is when social history and social theories develop their own authoritarianism; and most often for the survival of the elite. This authoritarianism exhibits itself as the rule of a population or a country by a powerful or dominant elite that represses opponents, public opinion, and the official communication channels (mass media) to maintain its own wealth and power. The

elite class is frequently indifferent to activities not affecting its security; and rival power centers, such as labor unions and political parties, are often allowed to exist, although under tight control.

An extreme form of such authoritarianism is totalitarianism. When the cleavage between public faith and governmental legality is so wide, governments in such societies take on the monstrous character of totalitarianism. This is when a government takes virtual control of all activities within a country, overtly political or otherwise, as in fascist or communist dictatorships. Examples of totalitarian regimes in the past century include Italy under Benito Mussolini (1922–1945), Germany under Adolf Hitler (1933–1945), the USSR under Joseph Stalin (from the 1930s until his death in 1953), and more recently Romania under Nicolae Ceausescu (1974–1989).

This lack of confidence between populations and their rulers may be, in a sense, a latter-day development of the lack of confidence between God's people and God, and in this peculiar incident between a variety of Israelis and the Lord. They knew very well God Almighty had banned them from violating the Sabbath, that is, they were not allowed to go fishing on the Sabbath day of every week. So how did they circumvent God's command? They "pre-Sabbathed" their fishing activity by casting their nets on the day before the Sabbath or in the immediate hours before the Sabbath, so that in the first minutes after the Sabbath they could rush out and pull in the tremendous catch of fish ensnared in the nets. Thus, they could say in a technical or literal sense that they did not engage in activities that deconsecrated the Sabbath. According to their circuitous logic, the fish were not engaged by their labor on the Sabbath, even though the act of fishing by remote control, as it were, took place on the Sabbath.

A committed stock of Jews among the larger population of Israelis realized that this amounted to a trick; so they tried to dissuade their coreligionists from such guile and dishonesty. Yet another breed among them turned to the honest ones, telling them to desist from their attempts at correcting the violators, for what benefit could be gained from turning against your own (disobedient)

brethren — the ones who will never comply with correction or yield to chastisement? In the end, they were doomed, **“And a community of them said, ‘Why do you advise [such] people when Allah will destroy or punish them severely?’”** The Sabbath law-breakers had reached the point of no return: they were beyond advice and good counsel, even redemption. They have already incurred God’s judgement, punishment, and suffering.

So why did the committed Jews try to redirect the motivations of their transgressing brethren? **“They said, ‘This is an exoneration [for us] in front of your Sustainer; and they may still factor in His power and be on guard [pertaining to it].’”** In effect, they were saying that this was their duty; they were advising the miscreants because they felt responsible and duty-bound to try to enforce the common good and de-institutionalize what was commonly pernicious. They could not stand by and see God’s laws being violated, pretending that nothing so serious was going on. So when they publicly took an advocacy position, it was meant, at the very least, to satisfy their God-given and God-honored conscience — so that God would know they did whatever they could to arrest the rogue elements’ devious disinclination from Him. Besides, one can never be too sure, sometimes words from the high ground may move some hearts, and certain individuals may see the light and discontinue their misbehavior and wrongdoing.

The *āyah* alludes to three coexisting communities within that Israeli society — distinct, different, and diverging. One Israeli community was obviously God-offensive and underhanded. Its opposite was straightforward and opposed to the Sabbath tricksters. They adopted a positive and active role in advising and admonishing the Sabbath transgressors. The third community knew what was right and what was wrong but was skeptical about changing the status quo and opposing its “own” who were doing the wrong thing. In today’s world, these three communities may be designated by the descriptions of “denomination,” “school of thought,” “affiliation,” or any other definition that is sometimes inaccurate and other times misleading. The Qur’an describes three distinct orientations as they related to or did not relate to Allah (ﷻ).

Finally, when advice proved ineffective, when good counsel bore no fruit, and when the malefactors consolidated their God-defying status quo, at that time Allah's word came due. His warning materialized. Those who honored their Lawmaker and kept their Sabbath were blessed and redeemed, while those who dishonored and desecrated the Sabbath had to face God's punishment. As for the members of the third community who knew what was right but failed to take the initiative to stop the wrongdoing, there is no textual Qur'anic comment on their fate — maybe because they were inconsequential. That they were not mentioned along with the Jews of sound faith does not mean they were not punished along with the transgressors,

**And when they dismissed from their minds what they were made aware of [from on high] We rescued those who were advising against profanity, and We swept away the wrongdoers with an appalling affliction due to their degenerate behavior. And then when they disdainfully persisted in doing what they had been forbidden to do, We said to them, "Be as apes despicable!" (7:165–166).**

Such is Allah's social law. Such are the lessons that accrue to those who read history accurately. The Israelis tried to play tricks with Allah's laws because in the core of their hearts they were not warmly receptive of Him, and thus the effects of their own actions turned against them in the form of a horrendous and painful visitation. They did not disobey God every once and then. They did not violate His orders in a selective manner. They institutionalized their disobedience of God. And in proportion to that socially institutionalized disobedience came the genetically institutionalized punishment, **"Be [as] apes despicable!"**

### How the Children of Israel Profaned the Sabbath

The Qur'an makes it very clear that the issue of the Sabbath pertains to Allah (ﷻ) as authority and power, and man as subject and dependent. However, before reconciling the scope of the punishment given to the Israelis with the magnitude of their crime, consider how the Sabbath has been fudged with artificial piety, religious inroads, and ceremonial embellishments within the Judeo-Christian worldview — to such an extent that the original event is almost unrecognizable.

The Sabbath is the weekly day of rest, joy, and dedication. Jews acknowledge the period from sunset Friday to nightfall Saturday as their Sabbath. Most Christians observe it on Sunday, though the Seventh-day Adventists continue observance on Saturday; the term has been applied to the first day of the week (Sunday) as the memorial of Jesus' resurrection. To the Jewish people, the weekly Sabbath is the holiest day in the Hebrew calendar, with the one exception of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The first thing in the world that God made holy was not a mountain, not an altar, not a land; rather it was a day — the Sabbath,

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made (Genesis, 2:2–3).<sup>534</sup>

In the Bible, the Sabbath is the only holy day of which observance is mandated in the Ten Commandments: first in the Book of Exodus (20:8–11) and again in the Book of Deuteronomy (5:12–15). The first part of the Fourth Commandment, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus, 20:8), may show that the Sabbath was well established long before the Israelis stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Jews connect the Sabbath to two theological roots: the Creation (cited above in the Book of Genesis) and the Exodus from Egypt,

And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day (Deuteronomy, 5:15).

According to some within the Judeo-Christian belief-system the Sabbath was built into the structure of the universe from the beginning, “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Genesis, 2:3). The Sabbath commandments in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:8–11; Deuteronomy, 5:12–15) agree that the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord for the entire household. The reason for the Sabbath rest is basically humanitarian (Exodus, 23:12), though the command appears once in a “cultic” context (Exodus, 34:21). It is for this reason that the *kiddush*, the blessing over wine ushering in the holy Sabbath — “a memorial of Thy work of creation” — marks the first of the holy convocations, “recalling our going forth from Egypt.”<sup>535</sup>

The special status of the seventh day and its name were disclosed to the Jewish people (Israel) in the wilderness. For their food, God supplied their day’s portion of *manna* for five days. On the sixth day, God provided a double portion of *manna* to last through the seventh day, on which no *manna* appeared. The Israelis were commanded to collect and prepare each day’s portion for the first five days; on the sixth day, they were to prepare for two days. On the seventh day they were not to go out. In this way, they learned that the seventh day is “a holy sabbath unto the Lord” (Exodus, 16:23). The two loaves of Sabbath bread at the Friday night meal are a reminder of the double portion of *manna*.<sup>536</sup>

*Shabbat*, the Hebrew word for the Sabbath, is related to the verb *sa-bat*, which means *to cease, desist, rest (from work)*. While the Bible does not specify all the various kinds of work forbidden on the Sabbath, it does mention a few, among them buying and selling, traveling, and cooking. The Mishnah, the largest post-biblical collection of Jewish laws, lists, under 39 categories, all acts

defined as work in Jewish law and therefore forbidden on the Sabbath. These include plowing, reaping, carrying loads, kindling a fire, writing, sewing, and the like. The prohibition against work on the Sabbath extends to the free and the slave alike, and to beasts of burden,

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates (Exodus, 20:10).<sup>537</sup>

The Sabbath demands more than the stoppage of work, however. It is specifically marked off as a day devoted to God and to the life of the spirit. It is to be honored by the kindling of lights, eating good food, wearing one's best clothes, worshiping, receiving religious instruction, studying, and demonstrating love for family and friends. The most important observance of the Jewish Sabbath is in the home. Every home is perceived as a small sanctuary; the family table is the "altar." In the observant home, the mother lights the candles at sundown Friday and recites a blessing over them. The father blesses the children. For boys, the blessing is, "May the Lord make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh"; for girls, "May the Lord make thee as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah." Then he recites the priestly blessing over all the couple's children,

May the Lord bless thee and keep thee.  
May the Lord cause His countenance to shine upon thee  
and be gracious unto thee,  
May the Lord lift up His countenance unto thee and give  
thee peace. Amen.

In honor of his wife, the husband recites "A woman of valor..." (Proverbs, 31:10–31). The Sabbath table is covered with the best tablecloth, set with the best dishes, with the *kiddush* cup, and with two loaves of Sabbath bread. The father says the *kiddush* over the

wine and a blessing over the bread. After the Sabbath meal, blessings are said and joyful songs are sung.<sup>538</sup>

In the synagogue, the Sabbath is welcomed as a bride and bidden farewell as a queen. Sabbath services include reading from the Torah — a scroll of parchment that contains the Five Books of Moses (תנ"ך), the Pentateuch, in unvoweled Hebrew — and from the prophets. There is a period of study and religious instruction in the afternoon. The end of the Sabbath is marked when three stars appear in the sky. The Havdalah ceremony features the lighting of a specially braided candle, blessings over wine, over spices in a special spice box, and over the candle. Finally, a “separation” blessing praises God “who divides the holy from ordinary, the light from the darkness.” The rabbinic tractates *Shabbat* and *Erubin* delineate what constitutes work and the “Sabbath resting place” respectively. From the exile in the sixth century BCE to the present, Sabbath observance has served as a sign of Jewish identity. Attempts by the Reform Jewish movement in the 19th century CE to move synagogue services to Sunday morning had little or no popular appeal.<sup>539</sup>

The beauty of the Jewish Sabbath has been enhanced by a rich embroidery of folklore. The Sabbath, for example, is perceived as a fair and chaste bride descending on the rays of the setting sun to her faithful lover. There is a legend about two angels who accompany each Jew as he goes home from the synagogue on Friday night. Every devout Jew is said to acquire an additional soul on the Sabbath — an extra measure of spirituality. Scholars assert that the Sabbath as a universal rest day devoted to God is one of the most important Jewish contributions to civilization.<sup>540</sup>

In the New Testament, the celebration of the Sabbath is noted in the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and also (more negatively) in the Epistles. During the life of Jesus the Sabbath was an essential part of Jewish life and piety. Accordingly, as a devout Jew, Jesus kept the Sabbath, attending synagogue and helping to lead the service (Luke, 4:16–30; Matthew, 13:53–58; Mark, 6:1–6; Acts of the Apostles, 13:14–16). The chief matter of controversy was what constituted “work” on the Sabbath day of rest. The group represented in the Damascus Document (probably early Essenes) laid



down very strict rules, far stricter than those later codified by the rabbis. This debate is reflected in various Gospel episodes (Matthew, 12:1–14; Mark, 2:23–3:6; Luke, 13:10–17; John, 5:1–18, 7:19–24, 9:1–41). There Jesus (ﷺ) appears as respectful of the Sabbath yet having the authority to do what more strict observers might not allow. Jesus' devotion, however, was tempered by the view that "... the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Indeed, Jesus' practices sparked controversy with the Pharisees, as he demonstrated that the intent of the Sabbath was to benefit people, rather than being a ritual observance that must not be deviated from (Luke, 6:1–11; Matthew, 12:1–14; Mark, 2:23–28, 3:1–3).<sup>541</sup>

As the first century CE progressed, Sunday became a more important and distinctively Christian institution. The theological root was Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday and his "appearances" to the disciples. The first day of the week (the "Lord's Day") became a time for Christians to gather for prayer, the Eucharist, and collections (1 Corinthians, 16:2; Acts of the Apostles, 20:7; Revelation, 1:10; Didache, 14:1). This is how the Christians began to celebrate their "sabbath" on Sunday, although the early "Jewish" Christians apparently continued to honor the Jewish Temple worship, to observe the Saturday (Jewish) rest, in addition to the Sunday (Christian) worship-fellowship (Acts of the Apostles, 13:14–15, 14:1, 16:13–16, 17:17, 18:4, 21:26). But in the early second century CE, Ignatius of Antioch urged Christians to "no longer observe Sabbaths but fashion their lives after the Lord's Day" (Magnesians, 9).<sup>542</sup>

For early Christians Sunday was primarily a time for worship. Following the Constantinian Sunday Law of 321CE, however, church leaders often appealed to the biblical Sabbath commandment and applied it to the observance of Sunday as a day of rest from work. Medieval theologians defended this transfer by interpreting the basic Sabbath law in the Decalogue as a moral precept and disregarding its ceremonial features (including Saturday observance). The Protestant Reformers held different views about the Sunday Sabbath: a day of worship (Martin Luther), a day of worship and cessation from labor (John Calvin) and a day equivalent to the

biblical Sabbath in every respect (English Puritans). The “radical Reformation” spawned various Sabbatarian (Saturday observing) groups, the most prominent Christian Saturday-observers today being the Seventh-day Adventists. They point to the clear teaching of the Hebrew scriptures on the Sabbath and look on the Sabbath as a sign of creation, hope for future redemption, and the transcendence of God.<sup>543</sup>

Sabbath observance involves interrupting regular patterns of work and everyday activity. It provides physical rest, spiritual refreshment and social space for its observers. It fosters social solidarity especially where observers (Jews in the Diaspora, Seventh-day Adventists) form a minority. It has led to economic, legal, and cultural tensions where the majority hold to the different practice.<sup>544</sup>

The Sabbath remains the Jewish day of rest and worship. Whatever debate there may be in Judaism about the Sabbath concerns its practice, not so much its theology. Seventh-day Adventists have developed an elaborate theology of the Sabbath and situate their observance in that context. Mainline Christian churches reflect the tensions that have accompanied the matter from New Testament times. Should Sunday be primarily a day of worship, or is it also a day of rest? To what extent should Old Testament Sabbath regulations be transferred to Sunday?<sup>545</sup>

Contemporary discussion about the Sabbath often relates to secularization and ecology. In so-called Christian countries the Sabbath regulations imposed on Sunday are rapidly disappearing through legal and political processes. However inevitable this trend is and whatever economic and social benefits it may bring, many people wonder about physical and psychological exhaustion in societies in which one day is the same as every other. Those concerned with ecology find in the Sabbath concept a rich resource for giving the earth a “rest” and thinking about the “environmental Sabbath.” Their interest, however, seems to be with the basic idea of Sabbath rest rather than its biblical-theological foundations and traditional observances.<sup>546</sup>

All of the above Judeo-Christian talk about the Sabbath does not highlight this defining moment in the history of the Children

of Israel when a segment of them failed to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath. Their recurrent attitude of defiance appears to be accessorized by a selective memory that seeks to efface such episodes from their recalcitrant history. They failed to observe the prophecy concerning Muhammad (ﷺ) and now they feel uneasy, if not troubled or nervous, when the Qur'an reminds them of these facts, which they either buried in their history or maintain a secret copy of in their clandestine theological network of information. The Qur'an relates without a shadow of a doubt that a breed of Israelis treated the Sabbath irreverently and almost sacrilegiously. And the Qur'an has never been manipulated by a religious class or deformed by political power to the extent of omitting such valuable and vital information from it. It is still the same and exact Qur'an that was revealed to Muhammad (ﷺ) and committed to man's oral and written potential.

### **Primate Regression as a Punishment for Serial Defiance**

There is a statement in the Qur'an that some would consider “offensive,” and others, an “anti-Semitic” conviction. The words of Allah (ﷻ), not man, are **“We said to them, ‘Become [like] apes [retrograde humans] despicable.’”**

How exactly did these fickle and false Israelis who defamed the Sabbath become apes? What happened to them after they transitioned — physically, psychologically, or both — into apes? Did they ever survive as a species? Or did they become extinct? Or was there copulation at some level, therefore breeding and reproduction, between them and the primate apes? A thorough research of *tafsir* literature reveals numerous and sundry answers, many of which are conjectures, some less believable than others. What is known with certainty is that Allah (ﷻ) did not elaborate on their devolution into apes, nor did He comment on what happened to them in succeeding generations, and nor did He mention whether they or some type of “clone” extension of them still exists.

In today's scientific world and academic circles there is much talk about human beings evolving from primitive forms of life — all

the way from aquatic life forms to the pre-human primates. Such concepts as *biological convergence* circulate in some “scientific circles.” They say that the independent evolution of a structural or functional similarity, not based on an inherited similarity of genetic material, in two or more unrelated organisms is an adaptation to a particular way of life. For example, the similarities between a bird and a bat that are related to their ability to fly are the result of convergent evolution. There is also “scientific talk” about fossils — the remains of a once-living organism, usually restricted to organisms that lived prior to the last Ice Age.<sup>547</sup> Fossils typically comprise the bodies or parts of the organisms themselves, but also include a variety of trace fossils such as burrows, tracks, impressions, and feces. Fossils are usually mineralized and found in sedimentary rocks.<sup>548</sup>

Also in the “scientific community” there are those who speak about genetics, the science of heredity. It originated with the discovery by Gregor Mendel that hereditary characters are determined by factors transmitted without change and in predictable fashion from one generation to the next. The term was coined by British biologist William Bateson in 1907. Genetics occupies a unique position: its principles and mechanisms extend throughout almost all biology, and it ties together all branches that deal with variation — the molecular structure of cells and tissues, the development of individuals, and the evolution of populations. The mechanisms of genetics are applied to make, in the laboratory, substances formerly obtainable only from organisms (for example, vaccines and hormones), and the time may not be far distant when genetic errors responsible for disease may be correctable. Or so they say.<sup>549</sup>

Going further in this direction, scientific talk about mutation — an abrupt change in the genetic characteristics of an organism — has gained more and more currency. In chromosomal mutations, there is a deletion, breakage, or rearrangement of chromosome material. In molecular mutation, there is a physico-chemical change in the DNA sequence, either with a codon, or involving the loss, duplication, or rearrangement of longer sections of DNA. An example of the first would be a baby born with the “cat-cry” syndrome, (in which the mutation is a deletion of the short arm of

chromosome 5). An example of the second would be a baby born with or developing Duchenne muscular dystrophy in a family with no previous history.<sup>550</sup>

Just as there was a divine will that managed the Sabbath test of the Israelis — the fish coming to shallow waters on the Sabbath, thus tempting whoever was worldly away from God's obedience — there was also a divine will that administered the punishment for those who proved their institutionalized disobedience of God, His authority, and His power in the form of genetic regression into apes or anthropoid primates. Whether they became lesser apes (gibbons) or great apes (orangutans, gorillas, or chimpanzees) cannot be ascertained with certainty. Notable here is that these devolving Israelis resembled non-human primates, that is, the latter differ from monkeys as they have no tail and they use arms to swing through trees, not by walking along branches.<sup>551</sup>

The few Israelis who confirmed the validity of the last Apostle and unlettered Prophet (ﷺ), and subsequently followed him, escaped the transformation that relegated their coreligionists into a less-than-human state,

**And thereupon, when those [sinners] had forgotten all they had been told to take to heart, We saved those who had tried to prevent the doing of evil, and overwhelmed those who had been bent on evildoing with dreadful suffering for all their iniquity; and then, when they disdainfully persisted in doing what they had been forbidden to do, We said to them, “Be as apes despicable!” (7:165–166).**

However, so egregious, insistent, and relentless was the violation of the rest, that all future generation who exhibited such doggedness would be divinely overwhelmed until the Day of Resurrection,

**And lo! your Sustainer issued a decree that most certainly He would rouse against them, until Resurrection Day, people who would afflict them with cruel suffering:**

**verily, your Sustainer is swift in penalization — yet, verily, He is [also] much-forgiving, merciful (7:167).**

This God-given permission has been borne out by history. The Israelis as a whole have been conscience-challenged and shamefaced as they live a life of God-abandonment. In their history there have always been opponents who delivered upon them unrelenting suffering. Yet, despite this, there has been no detectable Israeli change of mind or change of attitude; and so, there has been no previous historical experience that would constrain the “goyim” — the Israeli characterization of the “other” — from subjugating them to “cruel punishment.” To be sure, there have been times in this Israeli history of incorrigibility when they prospered, moved up in society, and reached its upper crust. But then, as if on cue, they inevitably displayed their self-aggrandizing and house-proud character that has always turned the rest of society against them. They cannot stop being who they are. And this cycle has repeated itself from one epoch to the next and from one continent to its adjacent one. The obstinate and defiant Israeli character has predictably solicited a reactive and harsh “gentile” response. Sometimes the response to the Israeli historical attitude has come from Allah’s obedient subjects who have dealt with them in conformity with scripture and justice; however, on most occasions, they were subjected to the most degrading, humiliating, and agonizing treatment, which was all the more atrocious because it flouted the standard of scripture much as the endemic Israeli attitude of defiance had. And still these Israelis have not yielded to God Almighty.

In our age and time, some people, even Muslims, think that these Israelis are meritorious, applaudable, or even exemplary. These Israeli admirers who have been deceived by the rolling spin machine that attends concentrated power and wealth are blind to the bigger picture; they cannot extend their vision to either the past to see how the Israelis were, or to the future to see how these Israelis will become — pathetic, dispossessed, lamentable, and sometimes silly. This shall be the plight of such Israelis until the Day of Resurrection, as confirmed by Allah’s irrevocable words,

**“...for your Sustainer’s penalty is quick — yet, verily, He is much-forgiving, merciful.”**

All violators of Allah’s laws and all who break away from His covenant shall endure the painful consequences, be they Israelis in that seaside town who profaned the Sabbath or any other society that defiles the spirit and the letter of divine scripture. However, even in the case of such unrepentant and willful transgressors, Allah’s mercy and forgiveness offers an opportunity to allay His punishment. He will accept Israelis and non-Israelis who can appreciate and affirm the unlettered Prophet cited in the Torah and acknowledged in the Gospel. Allah (ﷻ) does not punish those who deny Him because He has something personal against them; rather they are punished in accordance with the principles and standards of His thoroughgoing justice. Besides, no human court could be equipped to satisfactorily try them for the extent and the breadth of their crimes against humanity — only God has this capacity.

The Qur’anic discourse moves beyond Mūsá and his generation, to the subsequent Israeli generations, to that generation at odds with Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Islamic society in Madinah,

**And We disunited them into [divided] communities all over the world; some of them were righteous, and some of them less than that: and the latter We tried with blessings as well as with afflictions, so that they might mend their ways. And they have been followed by [new] generations who — [in spite of] having inherited the divine writ — clutch but at the fleeting good of this lower world and say, “We shall be forgiven,” the while they are ready, if another such fleeting good should come their way, to clutch at it [and sin again]. Have they not been solemnly pledged through the divine writ not to attribute unto Allah anything but what is true, and [have they not] read again and again all that is therein? Since the life in the hereafter is the better [of the two] for all who are conscious and on guard [of Allah] — will you not, then, use your**

reason? And as for those who hold fast to the divine writ and standardize the *ṣalāh* [in society], verily, We shall not fail to requite these [standard-bearers] who improve [their conditions]! (7:168–170).

This last segment concludes with a worldview of subsequent Israeli generations and communities — the Israeli diaspora and their wandering from land to land, their multiple exoduses. Unable to learn from their own history, they take with them their irreconcilable differences, clashing opinions, and hard to manage concepts. They experience a “Jewish” internalization as well as a gentile reality. In this diaspora fate the sub-good assembly of Jews always made life difficult for the good fringe. Accompanying them in this historical diaspora were sequences of tests and tribulations from on high — through good times and bad. All this was meant to encourage them to return in character and in sincerity to their Sustainer, **“And We tested them through good times and bad that they might return [to Us].”**

Some people feel that rough and demanding circumstances are not suitable or worthy of God’s people, be they Israelis or non-Israelis. This view, however, departs from the scriptural standard. Trial and assessment is necessary for communities and peoples to prove, if only to themselves, their mettle and self-worth,

**And they were followed by a generation who inherited the [divine] Book, who would adhere to what is convenient to them and say, “We are forgiven.” And if they are given [not via inheritance] such easy responsibilities they would accept (7:169).**

The difference between the post-Moses generations and their antecedent formative one is that the former obtained through inheritance the Tablets, the scripture, and the Commandments. So they ended up studying scripture more than they struggled alongside it as a guide. Hence, they were deficient of the experience and the energetic attempt to achieve the God-given objective. Giving it a contemporary twist, they were more academic than practical, more



in the classroom than out in the field doing the work that had to be done. From this perch, they developed an affinity for the comforts and luxuries of life. This is the backdrop that produced the stultifying statement, **“We shall be forgiven.”** In such a manner did they become world-bound rather than heaven-bound.

**“Have they not assumed the scriptural pledge — that they shall not speak about Allah except the truth? Having studied what is in it?”** This meant that they would have had to put into practice what they understood of scripture without all that mental “beating around the bush,” and thus to speak the truth concerning Allah’s authority and power, His presence and company. So, as in their past generations, why are the current Israeli generations riveted to the life of the world? While still claiming they are forgiven? Where in scripture does God forgive the absence of a lifelong effort to approach Him and do His will? How can they assume that they get away with painting themselves with a scholarly or academic brush and then dismiss all the hard work that goes with God’s obedience. Is it possible for anyone to be more hypocritical? They read God’s scripture, they exclude hard labor on the way to God as a qualifier for His mercy, and then they fulfill their worldly desires with all the cravings and obsessions that are characteristic of worldly creatures and not God’s people.

This is not strictly an Israeli malady, even though they have perfected living with it while deadening their conscience. We the “Muslims” do have our share of “scholars” who have studied Islam inside and out but instead of effectuating this knowledge through a required struggle (jihad) in life, they use their brainpower and their academic degrees to twist the Writ, to try to corrupt the Qur’an, and then to exempt themselves from being the upstanding Muslims they are expected to be. Some of them use *āyāt* and hadiths to reconcile themselves to authoritarian regimes, or to praise egotistic leaders, or to call for peace with Zionism and imperialism.

**“But the final abode is better for those who are on guard [concerning Allah’s power presence]. Do they not reason?”** And this is the litmus test. How many Israeli, Arab, or others’ hearts are in the final abode while their hands work Allah’s will in this world?

This world has to be reworked to meet the standards of Allah (ﷻ), it has to be made to approximate the approaching world, or else we the scripturalists have done nothing to qualify for His forgiveness. Knowledge alone will not get it done. There has to be a rock-solid certainty, an unshakable determination that cannot be fooled or sold through the market mechanisms of a materialistic world.

Past or present, whatever arguments may have been posed against this approaching life remain trivial and sometimes stupid when compared to Allah's facts and His indisputable information. People need this certainty — the certainty of the coming life and its inevitability. There is a predominantly Israeli information industry that tries to weaken or destroy this certainty in particular. But such attempts will always fall short in the long run, for this Qur'an and the love of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) will remain the fountainheads of this certainty, come what may.

**For [We shall requite] all those who hold tightly to the divine writ and institute [the principle of] *ṣalāh*. Verily, We shall not fail to repay those who improve [their condition]! (7:170).**

To put it candidly, this is a broadside at those who are entrusted with scripture but then fail to socialize its values, merits, principles, and standards. “**Hold[ing] tightly to the divine writ**” is not going to be “a piece of cake.” There will be the attendant tension and danger that comes with scriptural territory. This Scripture (the Qur'an) demands serious minds, not fanatical ones; it calls for power, not precariousness; and it needs completion, not abdication. This means that the ingredient of jihad, or a heavenly defined struggle, is unavoidable. The world is screaming in silence. There are so many questions and enveloping confusion without the mooring of this Qur'anic scripture, which only needs a human effort to see it through.

This initial intention of holding tightly to the Qur'an is followed by a collective effort to standardize and go public with the values and the vantage of overt, public, and popular *ṣalāh*. The word

*iqāmah* requires a widespread, public, and shared effort that makes it palpable and social, “...and institute [the principle of] *ṣalāh*. Verily, We shall not fail to pay back those who improve [their condition]!” This is the primer for how to grasp scriptural meanings and then work them into the world around. Whenever any people fail to extend God-given meanings into their social lives they expose their societies to the ultimate fate of disintegration and destruction.

To dramatize this lesson to worldly Israelis, a reminder brings this lesson to an end,

And [did We not say] when We caused the mountain [Mt. Sinai] to quake above the Children of Israel as though it were a [mere] shadow, and they thought that it would fall upon them, “Hold tightly with [all your] strength to what We have vouchsafed you, and bear in mind all that is therein, so that you might remain guardedly conscious [of Allah’s power presence] (7:171).

In this life-and-death scenario the Children of Israel were told to hold tightly to God’s pledge even as a mountain was about to fall upon them and crush them. How else could the importance of honoring God be brought to the attention of these importunate Israelis? In this moment of unescapable danger, in which they were certain that the mountain would collapse over their heads, they were told to hold tightly to the word of God and His book, and to have its meanings penetrate their conscience, so that there will be no other commanding power in the world other than God.

But the character of Israel cannot live a life with God at its center. There has to be in their own minds “other considerations,” “more details,” and their own way of interpreting things. They never honored that pledge as they were required to do — in a sustained and historical stride. Thus they incurred God’s wrath and condemnation. They were with God, once upon a time — but not any more. They proved who they really are in their fiber and at their core. And thus Allah (ﷻ) brings them the punishment corresponding to their crime. Justice demands it.

## Secularism Thrives as Islamic Accountability Withers

The extended communication below revolves around Allah's authority and divinity; it illuminates the issue of Allah's authentic authority as opposed to man's contrived authority. Authority is a fact of existence that permeates life at different levels. Here, the threshold of authority is traced to the genesis of human life, the origination of man's nature, and his birth into the physical and earthly dimension of being. In this scenario, the Qur'an goes where no memory has retained information: it describes a pre-memory time when Allah (ﷻ) engaged man in a testament that pertains to his own self and (future) life. This was at a primordial or prehistorical time.

What needs to be understood here is that human concurrence with Allah's sustaining authority is and has been elemental, patent, and undisputed. Man's coming into his innate consciousness accompanied his affirmation and appreciation of Allah's dominance and power, His command and control. This prototypical fact is embedded in the formative makeup and structural essence of man, as this lengthy passage will demonstrate. Herein, scripture becomes a bridge of information back to that pre-remembrance of man's initial and firsthand affirmation of Allah (ﷻ) and His authority. This is the cognitive area that gets buried under man's tendency to forget, further dismissed from the mind by man's greed for power and dominion. This fact is so dominant that if man were left to his common sense and his state of nature he should be able to acknowledge it. Alas, man is not left alone; he is devoured by his internal weakness and the avid powers externally that seek to claim all authority and power for themselves. Thus under the influence of internal and external pressures man would need prophets and scriptures to reconnect him with his "moment of truth" in which he asserted Allah's authority and power.

- (7:172) **And bear in mind your Sustainer as He drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam, and took them to witness against themselves [saying], "Am I not your**

- Sustainer?” — to which they answer, “Yes, indeed, we do bear witness thereto!” [Of this, We remind you] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, “Verily, we were unaware of this”;
- (7:173) Or lest you say, “Verily, it was but our forefathers who, in times gone by, began to ascribe divinity/authority to other beings beside God; and we were but their late offspring: will You, then, destroy us for the doings of those inventors of falsehoods?”
  - (7:174) And thus clearly do We spell out these [authoritative] messages; and [We do it] so that they [who have sinned] might return [to Us].
  - (7:175) And tell them what happens to him to whom We vouchsafed Our [authoritative] messages and who then discards them: Satan catches up with him, and he strays, like so many others, into grievous error.
  - (7:176) Now had We so willed, We could indeed have exalted him by means of those [authoritative messages], but he always clung to the earth and followed but his own desires. Thus, his parable is that of an [excited] dog: if you approach him threateningly, he will pant with his tongue lolling; and if you leave him alone, he will pant with his tongue lolling. Such is the parable of those who are bent on giving the lie to Our [authoritative] messages. Tell [them], then, this story, so that they might take thought.
  - (7:177) Evil is the example of people who are bent on giving the lie to Our [authoritative] messages, for it is against their own selves that they are sinning!
  - (7:178) He whom Allah guides, he alone is truly guided; whereas those whom He lets go astray — it is they, they who are the losers!
  - (7:179) And most certainly have We destined for Hell many of the invisible beings and men who have hearts with which they fail to grasp the truth, and eyes with which they fail to see, and ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle — no, they are even less conscious of the right way: it is they, they who are the [truly] heedless!

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ  
 أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا  
 كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ  
 وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَهِيَكُنَّا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ  
 نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَأَتَدُّ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ  
 آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبِعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾  
 وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَٰكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ  
 كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ  
 ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
 يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَنفُسُهُمْ  
 كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدَىٰ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ  
 فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ  
 الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا  
 وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ  
 الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ

يُحَدِّثُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَمَنْ  
خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا  
بِعَايِنَنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَأُمِّي لَهُمْ إِبْرَ  
كِيْدِي مَتِيْنٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَوْلَمْ يَنْفَكِرُوا مَا بَصَّاحِهِمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا  
نَذِيْرٌ مُبِيْنٌ ﴿١٨٤﴾ أَوْلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا  
خَلَقَ اللهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجْلُهُمْ فِإِئْتِي حَدِيثٌ  
بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾ مَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللهُ فَلا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ  
يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مَرْسِنُهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لا  
يُجْلِيهَا لَوْفَنَهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً  
يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللهِ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا  
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ قُلْ لا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللهُ وَلَوْ  
كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَأَسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا  
إِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ وَبَشِيْرٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ  
وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا حَمَلَتْ  
حَمَلًا خَفِيْفًا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ دَعَا اللهُ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ آتَيْتَنَا

صٰلِحًا لَّنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِيْنَ ﴿١٨٩﴾ فَلَمَّا ءَاتٰهُمَا صٰلِحًا جَعَلَا لَهُ  
 شُرَكَآءَ فِيمَا ءَاتٰهُمَا فَتَعَلٰى اللّٰهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ اَيُّشْرِكُوْنَ مَا لَا  
 يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلِقُوْنَ ﴿١٩١﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُوْنَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا اَنْفُسَهُمْ  
 يَنْصُرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَاِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ اِلَى الْهُدٰى لَا يَتَّبِعُوْكُمْ سِوَاكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 اَدْعٰوَتُهُمْ اَمْ اَنْتُمْ صٰمِتُوْنَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ  
 عِبَادٌ اَمْثَلُكُمْ فَاَدْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوْا لَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
 صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ اَلَهُمْ اَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُوْنَ بِهَا اَمْ لَهُمْ اَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُوْنَ بِهَا اَمْ  
 لَهُمْ اَعْيُنٌ يَّبْصُرُوْنَ بِهَا اَمْ لَهُمْ اٰذَانٌ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا قُلْ اَدْعُوا  
 شُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كَيْدُوْنَ فَلَا تُنظَرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٥﴾ اِنَّ وِلٰىىَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِى نَزَلَ الْكِتٰبَ  
 وَهُوَ يَتَوَلٰى الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُوْنَ  
 نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَاِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ اِلَى الْهُدٰى لَا  
 يَسْمَعُوْا وَتَرٰنَهُمْ يَنْظَرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يَبْصُرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

- (7:180) And Allah's [alone] are the attributes of perfection; invoke Him, then, by these, and stand aloof from all who distort the meaning of His attributes: they shall be requited for all they were wont to do!



- (7:181) Now, among those whom We have created there is a fellowship that guides [others] in the way of the truth and acts justly in its light.
- (7:182) But as for those who are bent on giving the lie to Our [authoritative] messages, We shall bring them low, step by step, without their perceiving how it came about:
- (7:183) For, behold, though I may give them rein for a while, My subtle scheme is exceedingly firm!
- (7:184) Has it, then never occurred to them that there is no madness whatsoever in [this] their fellow-man? He is only a plain warner.
- (7:185) Have they, then, never considered [Allah's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, and all the things that Allah has created, and [asked themselves] whether, perchance, the end of their own term might already have drawn near? In what other conversation, then, will they, after this, believe?
- (7:186) For those whom Allah lets go astray, there is no guide; and He shall leave them in their overweening arrogance, blindly stumbling to and fro.
- (7:187) They will ask you [O Prophet] about the Last Hour, "When will it come to pass?" Say, "Verily, knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer alone. None but He will reveal it in its time. Heavily will it weigh on the heavens and the earth; [and] it will not fall upon you otherwise than of a sudden." They will ask you — as if you could gain insight into this [mystery] by dint of persistent inquiry! Say, "Knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer alone, but [of this] most people are unaware."
- (7:188) Say [O Prophet], "It is not within my power to bring benefit to, or avert harm from myself, except as Allah may please. And if I knew that which is beyond the reach of human perception, abundant good fortune would surely have fallen to my lot, and no evil would ever have touched me. I am nothing but a warner, and a herald of glad tidings to people who will commit [to Allah]."

- (7:189) It is He who has created you [all] out of one living entity, and out of it brought into being its mate, so that the mate might incline [with love] toward it [its counterpart]. And so, when he has submerged her, she conceives [what at first is] a light burden, and continues to bear it. Then, when she grows heavy [with child], they both call unto Allah, their Sustainer, “If You indeed grant us a sound [child], we shall most certainly be among the grateful!”
- (7:190) And yet, as soon as He has granted them sound [offspring], they begin to ascribe to other powers beside Him a share in bringing about what He has granted them! Sublimely exalted, however, is Allah — above anything to which men may ascribe a share in His divinity/authority.
- (7:191) Will they, then, ascribe divinity/authority, side by side with Him, to beings that cannot create anything — since they themselves are created —
- (7:192) And [that] neither are able to give them support nor can they support themselves,
- (7:193) And, [that] if you pray to them [the idols] for guidance, they do not respond to you? As far as you are concerned, it is all the same whether you invoke them or keep silent.
- (7:194) Verily, all those whom you invoke beside Allah are but created beings like yourselves: invoke them, then, and let them answer your prayer — if what you claim is true!
- (7:195) Have these [images], perchance, feet on which they could walk? Or have they hands with which they could grasp? Or have they eyes with which they could see? Or have they ears with which they could hear? Say [O Prophet], “Summon to your aid all those to whom you ascribe a share in Allah’s authority/divinity, and thereupon contrive [anything you may wish] against me, and give me no respite!
- (7:196) “Verily, my protector is Allah, who has bestowed this divine Writ [the Book] from on high: for it is He who protects the righteous,
- (7:197) “Whereas all those you invoke in His stead are neither able to give you support nor can they support themselves;

- (7:198) “And if you pray to them [the idols] for guidance, they do not hear; and though you may imagine that they behold you, they do not see” (al-A'rāf:172–198).

Note here, initially, that the general compact in which man acknowledges Allah's sovereignty, authority, and power in a state of being preceding his worldly life follows the specific covenant (*mīthāq*) accompanying the history of Banū Isrā'īl. Earlier in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, Allah (ﷻ) says concerning the Children of Israel, “**And bear in mind that we contracted you [the Children of Israel] and raised the mountain above you...**” (2:63). Common to the general human covenant and the specific Israeli covenant is the unavoidable commitment to Allah. For what would a “covenant” mean short of man's commitment to God?

The wide-ranging counsel of the first *āyāt* in this discourse is advising Muhammad (ﷺ) to mention to all peoples the covenant that is due to Allah from them — a covenant in which they stood witness against their own selves, acknowledging that Allah is their sustainer and master; and to tell them that there is only One sovereign deity and One ascendent authority, that is, Allah (ﷻ). The Prophet was reminding them of something they were already familiar with in their pre-worldly existence. This means that if man were free of governments trying to program his thoughts and mold his feelings he would have sensed the almightiness and glory of Allah on his own.

When man's conscience was unencumbered by the desires and temptations of this world, he was asked by the almighty Creator, “**Am I not your Sustainer?**” And all the people who would ever be created wholeheartedly and conscientiously responded, “**Affirmatively yes: You are [our Sustainer].**” They affirmed that Allah is the only One who deserves their devotion and duty. Such an avowal goes a long way to debunking any excuse by anyone who could later on argue that no one informed him of God's authority and sovereignty. In fact, all were alerted to this fundamental reality, and, in confirmation, they replied in a manner that engaged both their minds and conscience.

This ingrained fact of man's natural inclination to Allah (ﷻ) and his recognition of Allah's singular sovereignty and all-time authority is mentioned in yet another *āyah* of this holy Qur'an,

**Then, orient yourself as your *dīn* requires [of you], independently; [for this orientation is] the disposition that Allah gave [to man], from which He cleaved man into being; and there is no alteration to the way Allah created man... (30:30)**

A hadith carries a similar meaning, “*Every newborn is born in God's state of creation.*”<sup>552</sup>

When the human conscience was asked to recognize Allah (ﷻ) as its Sustainer, it did not shy away from the truth or keep quiet about such a critical matter. The curious mind may want to understand where and when this happened. However, the Qur'an does not give any extra information to help man locate the “coordinates” of this event in his human realm. Man is not a creator in the way Allah is, and thus he cannot know exactly how and in what manner this took place. Suffice it to say that the primordial audience with Allah did take place, and man is reminded of it here by Allah's words, and so he cannot doubt it in the least.

In the wake of this acknowledgment, in which Allah (ﷻ) was recognized in His glory and singularity, came a responsibility that would attend man throughout his worldly life: the covenant relationship with Allah. Keep in mind that these words were expressed from on high over 14 centuries ago when information about human embryonic, biological, physiological, and anatomical knowledge was nonexistent. The information around at that time was more in the realm of the imagination than in the possession of the intellect. Today, scientific investigation has shed light on the gene, the unit of heredity, defining it as a segment of DNA that contains the instructions for the development of a particular inherited characteristic.<sup>553</sup> However, try as he might, man will still be ill-equipped to find a material or biological path to his primordial consciousness, the moments alluded to by *āyah* 7:172.

The scientific probe into man's biological and physical origins or into his physiological susceptibilities, even though this will be augmented by much more information in the future, represents only the tip of the iceberg of the human extension into life before and after what is known here on man's bio-planet. Though the following assertion may be considered sacrilegious by the material gods of the temporal world, science nonetheless is severely constrained; it only has the tools to investigate the "matter" or the "material" component of human life, and that too, with regard to life as it is lived in the celestial sphere known as planet Earth.

### No Excuses for Rejecting Allah after Affirming Him

And bear in mind your Sustainer who brings forth from the children of Adam — from their loins — their descendants and [who caused] them to testify to themselves [upon hearing His question], "Am I not your Sustainer? Said [they], "[Positively] yes, we testify. [Of this, We remind you] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, "But we were oblivious to this fact [Allah's Creator/Sustainer relationship to man]." Or [lest you] say, "But our ancestors were *mushriks* in times past, and we were their descendants; do You then destroy us for what [preceding] violators had done [many generations ago]?" In such a manner do We go into detail about Our power presence trusting they will return [to Us] (7:172–174).

The first part of this *āyah* places man's mind within the will and decree of Allah (ﷻ) as He is the one who decides how human life is to begin and subsequently continue. Accordingly, the descendants of Adam (ﷺ) emerge from the human body's loins and continue to procreate into future generations. As far as the available scientific inquiries are concerned, they provide some biological and physiological information that relates to human procreation. Despite this,

however, there are areas in the world where people still do not have the light of scripture or knowledge in their lives. For example, the Bhils of India believe that their god, Bhagwan, created the entire world, but the details of the construction were the work of his assistant, the giant Nung. The heroic deeds of Nung corrected Bhagwan's creation: for instance, he shot down a second, superfluous sun, thereby creating normal living conditions on earth.<sup>554</sup>

Some Polynesian peoples believe the Earth descended into the primordial sea from the skies, or was lifted from the ocean floor. Others believe that all things have been raised from the depths in the course of a holy battle between two beings, one from the upper world and the other from the underworld. In southwest China, a common theme is the belief that the origins of humankind date back to a brother and sister who were the only survivors of an all-destroying flood. At the gods' request, these two became the first parents of all humanity. In East Indonesia, on the other hand, humans were born from a marriage between the heavens and the earth.<sup>555</sup>

The Khmer, an Asiatic people living in Southeast Asia, Cambodia, and parts of Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, believe that humans are descended from a frog couple and have gradually become people. The Tungusi in Siberia believe in a creator-god, who, however, does not interfere with the worldly course of events. Supernatural beings or deities are responsible for whatever happens. They take care of the fertility of fields and people. There are sacred mountains and lakes that are home to a wide range of spirits. At times, these spirits have to be appeased, which is achieved through the help of shamans, who can establish contact with them.<sup>556</sup>

Thank Allah (ﷻ) for this valuable and protective knowledge in the Qur'an. Some Muslims believe that because they have a healthy dose of knowledge, everyone else thereby shares some of it; and although that is so now in many parts of a growing and interacting cosmopolitan world, there still are preliterate societies that linger in a tradition of ignorance, a culture of obscurity, and mores of uncertainty.

One such indistinct lack of illumination concerns how primitive people revere ancestors in a way that is out of all measured pro-

portion. They are keenly aware they would not exist were it not for their ancestors. Thus, to them, ancestors and deities together protect people and preside over the all-embracing order of things. If this is disturbed, there are consequences for the community — and it has to restore the order. This requires complex rites that can include headhunts or human sacrifice, as in Papua New Guinea until recent years. Consumption of human flesh is taboo in modern civilization, which suppresses such rites. But the tribes that practiced them did not see themselves as murderers; rather they were honoring the person they ate. When the natural habitat of primitive peoples is subjected to the forces of scripture and civilization, such traditional religions are fundamentally changed.

The words of the Qur'an express an unknown phase along a sequence of consciousness,

**And bear in mind your Sustainer as He extracts from the descendants of Adam — from their [lower] backs — their progeny. And He had them testify for themselves [when they heard Him ask], “Am I not your Sustainer?” They said, “Yes [definitely], we testify [to that fact].” [Of this, We remind you] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, “We were oblivious to that fact.” Or lest you say, “[But] our forefathers were *mushriks* aforetime and we were their progeny who came after them. Would You destroy us for what the violating [forefathers] set precedent for?” In such a manner do We spell out Our [power] manifestations — for, perhaps, they might return [to the truth] (7:172–174).**

This *āyah* covers a considerable range inclusive of inception, procreation, genesis, and creation. The details, however, can only be intellectually inferred from incomplete evidence. Scientific progress to date indicates that the male and female reproductive systems produce gametes, or sex cells — eggs in females, sperm in males. The male system is designed to deliver sperm into the female's system, where under proper conditions an egg and sperm unite,

forming a zygote, or fertilized egg, that contains all the genetic material needed to develop into a new human being. The female's reproductive system also provides the environment in which the fertilized egg develops over a period of about nine months into an infant ready to be born.

The *āyah* says, “...your Sustainer has extricated from the children of Adam — from their loins — their descendants...” The main organs of the male reproductive system are two testicles that lie in the scrotum, a sac of skin outside the lower abdomen. Beginning at puberty, the testicles start producing the hormone testosterone, which initiates sperm production within a vast network of seminiferous tubules. Testosterone is also responsible for the development of facial hair, increased muscle mass, and other secondary sex characteristics of men. Atop each testicle is the epididymis, where sperm mature and are stored.

The penis is designed for delivering sperm into the female reproductive system. It contains spongy tissue that can fill with blood, causing the organ to become erect. It also contains the urethra, a tube that carries semen, a mixture of sperm and fluids, out of the body during waves of muscle contraction called ejaculation. During ejaculation, millions of sperm leave the epididymis through the vas deferens, tubes that carry them to the urethra. Almost simultaneously, accessory organs release fluids into the urethra. These fluids provide a medium in which the sperm can swim through the female reproductive system, as well as sugar, which nourishes the sperm.

Studies of human physiology and anatomy demonstrate that the female reproductive system contains the two ovaries that produce the eggs. Beginning at puberty these ovaries also produce the hormone estrogen, which stimulates development of breasts, growth of genital hair, and other secondary sex characteristics of women. Each immature egg, or ovum, is contained in a separate follicle in the ovary. During the menstrual cycle, one egg matures and its follicle ruptures, releasing the egg into the fallopian, or uterine, tube. The egg travels through the tube to the uterus (sometimes called the womb), a muscular organ capable of changing shape and



dilating. It is here that an embryo develops into a fetus. When fully developed, the fetus is pushed from the uterus through a muscular tube, the vagina, to the outside.

The female reproductive system prepares itself for pregnancy on a regular cycle called the menstrual cycle. The cycle begins at puberty and continues until about age 50, when the cycle ceases, a stage called menopause.<sup>557</sup> The menstrual cycle lasts about 28 days, its stages regulated by a variety of hormones. In the first stage, the walls of the uterus thicken with blood vessels, preparing it to nourish an embryo. About a week later, a follicle in one of the ovaries bursts, releasing an egg into the fallopian tube. The egg travels toward the uterus, where the lining continues to thicken. If the egg has not been fertilized, that is, it has not been penetrated by a sperm, the uterine lining begins to break down and slough off the blood vessels constructed during earlier stages of the cycle. This tissue passes out of the body through the vagina, constituting the characteristic menstrual flow.

Science today also provides voluminous information about fertilization and embryo development. As an egg travels through the fallopian tube, it may meet and be fertilized by a sperm. The menstrual cycle then ceases. About seven days after fertilization, the fertilized egg has already divided numerous times and developed into a young embryo. The embryo implants itself in the uterine wall, where it will reside and grow until birth. One section of the young embryo forms a network of blood vessels similar to those in the thickened uterine wall. The two sets of blood vessels — one from the embryo, the other from the mother — form the placenta, a temporary organ that allows material such as nutrients and wastes to move from one set of vessels to the other. Basically, the placenta acts as the embryo's organs of respiration, digestion, and excretion. After approximately two months, most major organ systems have begun to form in the embryo and it takes on a human appearance. Now called a fetus, it is about one inch (2.5 cm) long and weighs about 0.035 ounce (1 g). Between now and birth it will grow to between 14–21 inches (35–50 cm) in length and increase in weight to 106–140 ounces (3–4 kg).

To give credit where it is due, science has provided an invaluable service in laying out biological and physiological inception, procreation, and the development of our human body. But science has been silent on what is happening within our inner selves, our psychological selves, our conscious selves, or our spiritual selves. Here is where Allah's scripture is much needed, timely, and informative. He takes man to times and places where his scientific instruments and tools have no access to. And He says to him that in the stages or in a stage of his coming into being, he was asked, "**Am I not your Sustainer?**" And all humanity said, "Yes, You certainly are."

How did all this happen? How did Allah pull from the posteriors of the children of Adam (ﷺ) their posterity? And how did He have them bear witness to the fact that He is their Sustainer? How did He speak to them? And how, exactly, did they reply? The answers to such questions relate to the domain of creation, which is specific to Allah (ﷻ). And when it comes to the specifics, the details, and the peculiarities of the process of creation we human beings, if not informed by Allah, will remain logically deficient; that is, we will not be able to entertain an answer that our mentalities can sufficiently comprehend. Cerebral man has to come to terms with the fact that he does not have access to the specifics and characteristics of creating something from nothing. The human mind cannot comprehend the magnitude and the depth of Allah because it is not equipped to do so. This question about Allah arises in some minds every time He performs some unimaginable "action" or "feat." Allah says,

**And He effaces what He wills and [He] affirms [what He wills]... (13:39);**

**And then He settled upon the throne... (25:59);**

**And the heavens are folded into His right [hand]... (39:67);**

**And then He ensconced unto the celestial sphere the while it was a fume... (41:11);**

**There can be no secret meeting between three persons without Him being the fourth... (58:7).**

**And your Sustainer comes as do the angels rank upon rank (89:22);**

And such descriptions can go on and on, tracing all the “acts,” “movements,” and characterizations of Allah (ﷻ) in the sublime Qur’an, but the only integrated and honorable understanding of these approximate descriptions is that man can have a sense of what they mean but he cannot hope to have a human “fit” for them when they pertain to the Unique and the Absolute. The Qur’an informs its readers that in the created world or in existence, there is nothing resembling or appearing like Allah. There is no way that insignificant humans are going to be able to comprehend His “substance” or how He does what He does. His work and accomplishment is unlike anything conceivable in the domain of man. Every attempt to cast Allah’s “effort” into a human image or pattern is misleading and fallacious. Obviously, He is not human; and humans are not gods. What issues from each is varied and dissimilar. This area has occupied philosophers and logicians for millennia. In the absence of a sound understanding of this Qur’an it will still continue to occupy the human mind, leading generally to meandering rhetoric, useless repetition, and empty conclusions.

Concisely, man should understand from these *āyāt* that Allah (ﷻ) etched into human nature its recognition of Him as Sustainer and Lord. Man develops into life with an innate recognition of Allah’s dominance and control. Somewhere along what may be called the unfolding of creation and life the conscious human was made aware of Allah’s eminence. This “awareness” leaves no excuse for *mushriks* who spend their lives and expend the lives of millions of others trying to take apart the sovereignty and transplant the superiority of Allah with other fabricated facades of authority and power.

**“Lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Verily, we were unaware of this...’”** This fact was implanted, so to speak, in man’s subconscious. And to dismiss it would be akin to deliberately amputating an appendage. Hence, he has no historical excuse, no genetic excuse, and no psychological excuse for doing so. Many hadiths corroborate this general meaning, two of which are,

*Every newborn is delivered in the state of nature [of His making — fiṭrah]; it is his parents who turn him into a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian.*<sup>558</sup>

*Says Allah, “I have created my subjects independent [of Satan]; then the demons approached them to swerve them from their dīn, and they [the demons] prohibited them from what I have allowed them.”*<sup>559</sup>

This means that deep down inside man’s conscience and mind there is an embedded recognition of Allah (ﷻ) as the Sustainer of life, man, and reproduction. Almost at the “instinctual” level, man has a propensity or an inclination toward the dominance of Allah. Built into the constitution of thought and intuition is that every action has its initiator and every event has its instigator. And the succession of movements and events on earth and in the cosmos need the Higher Authority that by definition — even at the expense of human mental deficiency — is the First without a beginning and the Last without an end. This “necessary Being” and only Him is worthy of man’s compliance. During that time of man’s “coming into being,” this whole issue was grounded into man’s conscience. The primordial human testimony to Allah’s sovereignty and authority voids all claims, arguments, and excuses that are fabricated by those who say they were only following in the footsteps of their errant ancestors, and should not be punished because of a serious mistake passed on from previous generations. Man does not inherit serious mistakes. Any particular version of historical precedent cannot be an excuse for rejecting the one and only Sustainer, who was affirmed by man before he emerged into this life.

Viewed from another perspective, this inborn and innate testimony by humans has been the concern of prophets and messengers from Allah (ﷻ) who were sent to their societies to rekindle this elemental fact, **“And thus clearly do We spell out these [authoritative] messages; and [We do it] so that they [who have sinned] might return [to Us].”** And they do return to Allah when they return to this intuitive and perceptive fact of their past. The consolidated lesson here leads to the following conclusions:

1. Human beings are eased into their worldly lives after having acknowledged at a time in their past the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is Sustainer and Sovereign over them.
2. Man does not have the excuse of dismissing his Creator and Maker; the evidence of the Creator and Sustainer is originaive and creative. Even when there are no prophets or apostles in man’s immediate life, the vestiges of Allah’s presence are abundant. Honorable and moral behavior are detectable by common sense and sound reasoning.
3. Whoever dies before the age of responsibility goes on to Allah’s bliss, as that person lives within the stretch of the covenant of innocence and affirmation that is mentioned in the *āyāt* above — when pre-earthly man affirms the sovereignty and authority of Allah (ﷻ). This would mean that when the babies and children of the *mushriks* die as such (before reaching adulthood), they also transit to a life of bliss.
4. The *mushriks* have no ground for pleading ignorance on the Day of Resurrection if they say that no prophet or apostle has come to them. They also stand on no solid ground for hiding behind the fact that they inherited their ancestors’ beliefs and practices, and thus they should not be held responsible for someone else’s life pattern or case law. Allah’s sovereignty and superiority cannot be nullified by ignorance or by impersonation of past generations.
5. This Qur’an has the answers to man’s existential problems and observational potential.

### **The Panting Dog: Metaphor for Scholars Who Abandon God**

At this juncture, the Qur'an rolls out a living example of one who was given accurate information and presented with evidence of the truth but then preferred to break away from it all. Such a person gravitates toward all things worldly, all the time chasing his fantasies. He becomes analogous to a panting dog: if it is sent running, it cannot catch its breath, and if it is left alone, it still cannot catch his breath. Such are the people who contradict Allah's *āyāt*; but for the rest of us, there are lessons to be learned from the experiences of others.

Some individuals have the capacity to shrug off any inborn or inbred knowledge, place their minds away from scripture, and then lunge impetuously into the attractions of the world. These types are controlled by Satan. More unfortunate is the fact that multitudes of people follow such people into a trap. The Qur'an expresses this whole dynamic in a strikingly picturesque way,

**And tell them what happens to him to whom We accorded Our [authoritative] messages and who then discards them: Satan catches up with him, and he strays, like so many others, into grievous error. Now had We so willed, We could indeed have exalted him by means of those [authoritative messages], but he always clung to the earth and followed but his own desires. Thus, his metaphor is that of an [excited] dog: if you approach him menacingly, he will drool with his tongue; and if you leave him alone, he will drool with his tongue. Such is the metaphor of those who are bent on giving the lie to Our [authoritative] messages. Tell [them], then, this story, so that they might reckon. Evil is the example of people who are bent on giving the lie to Our [authoritative] messages, for it is against their own selves that they are committing an offense (7:175–177).**

The lesson here portrays a person who is given access to Allah's words, scripture, and guidance. Allah's provisions are within

his reach; available to him is an abundant amount of unpolluted information. This person now has all the wherewithal to improve his life from all angles. But despite all of what he has been given, he virtually tears himself away from this good deal. The wording of the Qur'an constructs a picture of a person who is ungluing himself from God, literally tearing himself away, with all the hard work and elbow grease that goes with it. The foundational notion here is that man is naturally attached to God's commitment as skin is to body. Thus, a man who breaks away from Allah (ﷻ) is akin to a man skinning himself. Such an individual mercilessly exposes himself to the elements of alienation and disaffection — a man estranged and restless due to his own choice. This is the condition that entices the hand of Satan and enlists the bearer into the legions of the damned.

This word picture is disturbing and unsettling — in a word, scary. A wretched individual, perpetually affixed to the world with self-indulgent desires, born of clay reverts to the muck. To add detail to this already degenerate human, he is likened to a panting dog that can neither catch its breath running, nor at rest. This panorama delivers an array of images, with our imagination trying to keep up. As the Qur'anic observer is watching this person who is running so wildly in pursuit of his worldly ambition that he cannot catch his breath, he is confronted with the sequel of such misguided striving, **“Such is the apologue of those who contradict Our [authoritative] messages. Tell them, then, [such] verbal descriptions, so that they may think [things] over.”**

The fact that has been virtually effaced from public conscience by centuries of ungodly governments and power-mongering establishments is the one highlighted here: Allah's covenant with man and man's testimony to the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is sustainer and sovereign. The damage is multiplied when societies and countries rip themselves away from God and their primordial covenant with Him. It should come as no surprise, then, that there are sub-quality people roaming the earth with their militaries as they raze entire societies and exterminate thriving populations, all the while having no authoritative understanding of Allah's power. Peoples and societies in this grand state of denial are more akin to rapscallions than

they are to social beings and “God’s children.” In such a way are people transformed from their God-given state of nature, their God-entrusted covenant, to the animated brutes that cannot get enough out of world-centered cravings and preferences. In such a way are their aspirations turned from a calling to heaven to the flights of fancy into the abyss, all under the rubric of man’s so-called freedom of choice, **“Evil is the illustration of people who belie Our exemplifications [of authority]: for it is against their own selves that they are offending!”**

Though the Qur’anic text does not attach a name to the person in the narrative, many *tafsīrs* associate the story with a person by the name of Bal‘am ibn Bā‘ūrā’. And from there on, there are a maze of stories concerning who this person was, where he lived, and when he existed. Having a good sense of the creeping *is-rā’iliyāt* into *tafsīr* literature, this smacks as one of those. Therefore, all the dubious information pertaining to this specific person — if such a person with this name even existed — should be dismissed out of hand. What is important here is to stay with the Qur’anic meaning as it trails an individual’s corruption until it becomes the corruption of society and the fall of civilizations.

The narrative at its Qur’anic level fixes attention on people who adulterate and repudiate Allah’s demonstrations of power and expressions of authority. Having sensed how authentic such power and authority instances are, these types of people nonetheless place their confidence in earthly priorities and choose the immediate satisfaction of their worldly desires over the delayed gratification of everlasting bliss. What can be learned from the various aspects of this lesson is so true of many societies and cultures. In our time, there are many scholars who have been given a good proportion of knowledge and know-how from Allah’s scripture. But they, for reasons pertaining to their material priorities and self-interest, prefer to sideline what Allah (ﷻ) says. More to the point, these peculiar types of “scholarly” individuals “massage” Allah’s words to “fit into their hankering and partiality.” And all of this twisting and tossing of Allah’s solemn covenant aligns tightly with the power structure and established system best described as *tāghūt*.



How many a “Muslim scholar,” “Christian scholar,” or “Jewish scholar,” who knows very well what Allah (ﷻ) says to him and to the rest of the world, but for purposes traceable to his own ego and self-preference parts from Allah and sides with Satan. This type of “scholar” uses his knowledge to justify *jāhiliyah* and apologize for *tāghūt*. From time to time he publishes his “fatwas on demand” for the anti-Islamic regional or world order. Instead of working and struggling with his knowledge to dismantle *jāhiliyah* and *kufr*, he winds up issuing fatwas and religious edicts to substantiate *jāhiliyah* and excuse the system(s) of Satan.

In a world where the United States stands as the unipolar superpower, there do exist Muslim scholars who speak and write against the aggression and interference of the US in the internal affairs of Muslims. Many articles and books have been written and published by Muslim intellectuals against the reflexive US support of Israel along with an unending condemnation of the US’ occupation of Afghanistan and then Iraq. These are undoubtedly one class of Muslim scholars who are not short on expressing the truth, at least in a verbal sense.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is a crop of Muslim scholars who want to work their “Islamic” way up to power either directly within the American political system, or by means of an understanding or accommodation with the US to become influential figures in their countries of origin via a US-sponsored or US-tolerated democratic process in that particular country of origin. These types of Muslim scholars, who should be more or less skeptical of their own confidence in the US government and its institutions, keep on hoping that the justice of the American political process will one day canopy their lives and the people they seek to represent. This latter strain of “Muslim scholars” broadly falls under a Saudi umbrella, with Iraq coming in as a dubious second after Saudi Arabia.<sup>560</sup> And the rest of the national and tribal states follow along with their less-than-impressive hosts of “Islamic” scholars, who may know how to theoretically state the truth, but ultimately prove which side they are on when it comes down to practicing it. How apt and accurate the *āyah* is when it comes to these sell-your-soul scholars,

**And tell them what happens to him [the scholar] to whom We allotted Our [genuine] messages and who then discards them [as having their meanings annulled or out of context]: Satan catches up with him, and he [the scholar] strays, like so many others, into grievous error (7:175).**

This type of pseudo-scholar descends the evolutionary ladder and becomes on par with, of all animals, a dog. If only this informed Muslim (scholar or otherwise) would have taken to heart what has come to him from the Gracious and the Compassionate, he would have been elevated to the ranks of heaven,

**Now had We willed, We could indeed have elevated him by means of those [authoritative and genuine] messages, but he stuck to earth in perpetuity and followed but his own covetousness and mania. Thus, his analogy is that of an [excited] dog: if you approach him threateningly he snuffs and snuffles; and if you leave him alone, he will snuff and snuffle (7:176).**

Here, there is a social law, a God-given law built into the nature of man and society: Allah (ﷻ) will not promote individuals or societies that have turned their backs on Him. Had they taken to heart His instructions they would have ranked high in this world and in the next. But they chose to cast away and dispose of Allah's direction and advice, and so here they are huffing and puffing with nothing to gain and everything to lose.

Allah's revealed Scripture (the Qur'an) is no laughing matter. It is not inconsequential. And thus, it ought to take a substantial effort — comparable to peeling away one's own skin — to break away from Allah (ﷻ) and settle conclusively into the vagaries of the materialistic and animalistic world. However, once that is achieved, the person or the population descends yet further into the abyss, becoming the insatiable subjects of Satan. They virtually become brutes and beasts. This picture of a drooping dog even has

a modern English equivalent (or derivative) — the “dog-eat-dog” expression, which means *ruthlessly rapacious*. People today are often heard saying, “If you don’t look out for yourself, no one else will — it’s a dog-eat-dog world out there.”

This pictorial of potential “men of God” breaking away — tearing themselves away from Him — is to be found in every generation. It appears to be a constant in human history. On the other hand, there are those Islamic scholars who remain faithful, sincere, and observant of Allah (ﷻ) to the last day of their lives. Sometimes it appears they are few and far between. But they are also a constant in human history. They do not tear themselves away from Allah, and they do not settle into the lavishness and extravagance of a tempting world. They are not captives of their compulsions. And they cannot be humiliated or broken by Satan. Furthermore, they are not out there in a dog race chasing after the crumbs of the emperor; or to put it into context, they are not the poodles of the top dog. The lesson from this *āyah* is enduring. It is associated with bonafide people today much as it identified similar human behavior hundreds or thousands of years ago. And it will capture the behavior of those yet to come in future years and generations.

The substance herein was, on orders from Allah, recited by the Prophet (ﷺ) to his own people in Arabia so that they may not rupture from the unquestionable and earnest messages he received from the Most High. It pains this writer terribly to state that since these *āyāt* were revealed more than 14 centuries ago, there has been a whole slew of establishment obedient Muslims who are always ready to rip themselves away from Allah’s authoritative messages to satisfy their cozy relationship with worldly powers as well as their passions swerving around a world-centered precedence. Within the domain of Muslim contemporaries there is a good number of Salafīs who fit this bill. And not to be undone, there is also a good number of Sufīs who belong. Those who still linger in a traditional “Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jamā’ah” classification of Muslims might want to take a close look at the rulers of Arabia. And those who similarly persist with a traditional “Ahl al-Bayt” classification of Muslims might want to look at the rulers in Iraq. The exception to the

mainstream within these four trends that serve mammon and not the Almighty deserve to be respected by all Muslims.

It behooves us here to continue emphasizing the resounding implications of this *āyah*. Ergo, knowledge and scholarly achievement alone are not going to secure a person's good record with the Almighty. Within that same person who hoards knowledge in the head there are inclinations and desires, lusts and whims, and cravings and tendencies — all these, absent an active conscience for Allah (ﷻ), are capable of toppling the individual from his scholarly perch of tribute.

With this understanding, therefore, a Qur'anic and prophetic education require a committed Muslim to plant his knowledge less in his memory cells than in his living conscience and social extension. This dynamic, which belongs to the Islamic movement and Islamic state, has to be restored to its original dominion. Once this is put into motion, the Muslims can begin their long journey into their Islamic future and into the grace of the Almighty.

Recall that Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) never taught a theoretical Qur'an to the generation of committed Muslims around him. Whatever they learned they placed in their motivation and behavior, deriving logically from ethical or moral principles that govern a person's thoughts. When the Qur'an is reduced to a textbook — a book prepared for exclusive use in schools and colleges — it loses its doctrinal and ideological component in the field. Such scholastic studying of the Qur'an winds up in a student's memory for an exam at the end of the semester or at the end of the school year, and this is somehow considered to be a laudable achievement. As clear as this is, it goes unnoticed by the majority of planners and leaders in much of our current Islamic circles and movements. Think about it: the Prophet never held classes in an academic environment to teach the Qur'an the way it is taught today. This requires a serious reevaluation and restructuring of the Islamic movement so that the Qur'anic discourse can have the same impact it did on the first Islamic state in Madinah.

Today, there are universities and educational institutions throughout the Muslim and non-Muslim world that offer courses

supplemented by text editions of the Qur'an. And so, courses and curricula in the areas of "Islamic philosophy," "Islamic fiqh," "Islamic economics," "Islam and science," etc. are popular stepping stones on the way to an "Islamic" degree of sorts, yet none of this contributes to the task and struggle of replacing a *jāhili* world with an Islamic one.

Interested parties should begin by understanding that the Qur'an has to be relocated into the consciousness of man. This does not mean that he close off his mind and reduce his potential for understanding what Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) are telling him, as many Salafīs are prone to do today. Rather, in looking at it more broadly, the Qur'an has to pass through the mind to reach the conscience. In doing so, however, the Qur'an should not get stuck in the mind, channeled away from the conscience, and then re-routed into the domain of whim and worldly interests and priorities — as happens frequently with the "scholars for dollars."

The Qur'an, properly understood and consciously located, stands out in the behavioral and social sciences. A correct understanding of the Qur'an and a willful assimilation of its intents and purposes would easily annul the "filler theories" that occupy and then waste generations of people with results that are catastrophic to all. The Qur'an is the criterion by which all other social theories and practices have to be measured and evaluated.

The Qur'an, taken in the right manner and in good order, becomes the motivation of people and the transformation of societies from their *jāhili* mode into the light of guidance and direction from Allah (ﷻ). The Qur'an nourishes the initiative that comes with *īmān*; it defines the laws that become necessary at certain stages of societal growth. If the Qur'an is deliberately divorced from being the practical answer to practical social issues and problems, then the guidance the struggling generations of Muslims from the dawn of Islam until doomsday would have received from it would be replaced by the ruminations of the dominant *ṭāghūṭi* power culture.

Those who weave theories around the meanings of the Qur'an, extrapolate hypothetical arguments out of the *sūrah*s of the Qur'an, and spend semesters of precious lifetimes honoring the ac-

ademic value of the Qur'an are, sorry to say, wasting their time and other people's time in what may in the best of circumstances change the thoughts of some individuals but never the direction of society. It is at this juncture that the following *āyah* arrives, **“He whom Allah guides, he alone is truly guided; whereas those whom He lets go astray — it is they, they who are the losers!”** The issue of guidance is not a byproduct of knowledge alone. The privilege of guidance comes through a jihad, **“And those who struggle under Our auspices We shall guide them unto Our ways...” (29:69).**

In this mold, there are also those who choose to go it alone — no reference to Allah (ﷻ), no conscientious adherence to scripture, and no consideration for the lifetime struggle of the prophets and their living examples. The next *āyah* in the current sequence of *āyāt* addresses these characters,

**And most certainly have We destined for Hell many of the jinn and men who have hearts with which they fail to grasp the truth, and eyes with which they fail to see, and ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle — no, they are even less conscious of the right way: it is they, they who are the [truly] heedless! (7:179).**

Individuals and societies that deliberately choose a course in life not sanctioned by God will suffer the agonizing consequences,

**Indeed, those who deny and offend [Allah's authority and power] it does not behoove Allah to amnesty them or to guide them to a passageway except the passageway to Hell to abide in it forever... (4:168–169).**

This issue of man's destiny has occupied the minds of philosophers and even early Muslim scholars. To start with, the grand will of Allah (ﷻ) was to create a social being (humans) with a tendency to do what is right and a tendency to do what is wrong.

Within the human core of these conflicting tendencies is his primordial acknowledgment of Allah's sovereignty and authority. Above such tendencies is the human mind and rational potential that is able to distinguish guidance from misguidance. In addition to these innate features of man, Allah (ﷻ) sent him from time to time prophets and apostles who would point out the right direction in life. Thus, cumulatively, man has the capacity to be sensitive to his inner self, his informed thinking, and the scriptures and instructions presented by Allah's Prophets (ﷺ).

If a man (or society) opts for guidance he does so through a lifetime of jihad; this jihad itself generates momentum on the way to Allah (ﷻ). But then, a man (or society) who chooses to ignore his inner calling, who does not honor the results of rational thought, and who ignores the direction and instructions of prophets will assuredly move in the wrong direction and then reach the bitter results — the grief, agony, pain, and torment that comes not from God, but from what he himself did by design to himself.

Somewhere along this line, the notion of *karma*, Sanskrit for *action* or *work*, comes up. An Indian tradition, this is the principle that a person's actions have consequences meriting reward or punishment. *Karma* is the moral law of cause and effect by which the sum of a person's actions are carried forward from one life to the next, leading to an improvement or deterioration in that person's fate. Although the premise of contingent results due to a person's action or work in this world is understandable from a Qur'anic approach, this does not suggest that men will go through cycles of lives, with each successive life a result of the one before it. The struggle in this life (action and work) as outlined by the Creator becomes a "charge" for extra enlightenment and further guidance until this worldly life is over. Once it is over, man will go on to encounter the ultimate consequences of his worldly action and work. The *āyah* is not indicative of a cyclical process of enlightenment or regression whose incremental interval is a lifetime, often referred to as reincarnation.

**"Whoever Allah wills to guide becomes guided, and whomever He lets go astray are certainly losers."** The implemen-

tation of Allah's will is contingent upon what man does. If man works his will according to the will and word of Allah (ﷻ), then he becomes subject to His care and compassion. Equally, if man works his will in disagreement with or in contradiction to the will and word of Allah, then he goes wayward and loses himself, after which he loses everything.

### The Free Will/Determinism Divide: Lack of Scriptural Discipline

**And most certainly have We destined for Hell many of the jinn and men who have hearts with which they fail to grasp the truth, and eyes with which they fail to see, and ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle — no, they are even less conscious of the right way: it is they, they who are the [truly] heedless! (7:179).**

Reading this *āyah* and understanding it, especially for committed Muslims who are “in the field” is a simple statement of fact. A tyrant is destined to the Fire because he dispensed with his faculties of reasoning and sense of justice.

Embedded in this *āyah* is the issue of free will — the concept of human freedom to choose between good and evil, as opposed to determinism — which has preoccupied humanity all the way to the philosophical abyss. Some in the West would say that human responsibility for actions is implicit in most biblical writings, and the majority of Christian thinkers have assumed human free will in moral matters. The concept of conscience, so basic to later Greek thought and to St. Paul's arguments for universal sinfulness in the Book of Romans, Chapter 1, also assumes moral free will. The problems that have plagued theology in the questions about human free will have had to do not with human guilt and responsibility, but with the reconciliation of the assumed human capacity to choose, and with the confusion of moral free will with a supposed ability (granted by God) on people's part to accept or reject God's



salvation. This brought human free will into conflict with God's sovereignty, omnipotence, and omniscience. In another area, Christian theologians have had to defend human free will against materialistic determinism, like the atomism of Democritus, dialectical materialism (classical Marxism), and logical positivism — the last entailing the denial of all inner states of mind, including both determinism and freedom of the will.<sup>561</sup>

In the Western world, the usual outlines of the debates over human free will verses God's determinism (that is, predestination, providence, foreknowledge, foreordination) would include the struggle of St. Augustine (354–430CE), in his book *De libero arbitrio*, and Pelagius (a British monk living in Rome in the late fifth century CE, 360–420CE) over the absolute necessity of God's grace to be operational in a person before his or her will could be so moved as to choose the genuine good. It would also include the work of Beothius (477–524CE) on God's foreknowledge; he declared that God does know all that will happen, but God's knowledge is outside of time, in eternity, so that God's previous knowledge of what people will choose does not cause them to choose as they do.<sup>562</sup>

Another example is the conflict documented in Martin Luther's *De servo arbitrio* (*On the Bound Will*, 1525) between Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), the humanist, and Martin Luther (1491–1546), the Protestant reformer, whose theology was based on Sts. Paul and Augustine, both of whom were predestinarians. And, finally, there is the work of John Calvin (1509–1564), who opted for strict predestination, indeed, for so-called “double predestination,” in which people are elected by God for Heaven or Hell from before the existence of the earth. Other reformed theologians, following Calvin, like Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) denied human free will altogether. More liberal theologians resisted this “hard shell” position and, like John Wesley (1703–1791), sought to find a place for human free will without denying God's grace. Most such theologians, like Wesley, followed the lead of Jacobus Arminius of the Lowlands (1560–1609), who denied the double predestination and limited atonement (Christ died only for the elect) doctrines of the Synod of Dort (1618–1619).<sup>563</sup>

Much later, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) sought to make a place for human moral freedom in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). Kant said that man is free because he feels free. Man is not conscious of being determined in his choices. Kant argued that a moral code demands freedom, indeed, establishes the fact of human freedom, since ought implies can. Kant, by recourse to his famous dichotomy of the universe into phenomena (that is, the outer, material world) and noumena (the inner, mental world), resolved this by saying that people are determined phenomenally but free noumenally (that is, man's thoughts are free).<sup>564</sup>

In a general sense, Protestantism has emphasized a person's lack of, or severe defects in, freedom of the will. This is the case despite the decisions of the councils held at Carthage from 416–419CE, which made St. Augustine's teaching on predestination the official position of the Catholic Church.<sup>565</sup>

The parallel Western discussion about determinism — the view that all human actions are “caused” by earlier events, just as events in nature are causally linked together — suggests that in the case of human actions, many such causes may be at work, such as heredity, environment, psychological factors, or the chemistry of the body. Such a theory seems to contradict common sense, since most people believe that they have freely chosen their courses of action, perhaps after prolonged deliberation over alternatives. On the other hand, common sense also allows for causal connections in the world around, so why should there be an exception in the case of human actions?<sup>566</sup>

Arguments to justify either free will or determinism have always been inconclusive. Reflection on the human condition leads to the conclusion that, in reality, there are many factors in any human being that shape his actions one way or another. These include genetic makeup, the level of intelligence, predispositions of emotion and desire; in addition to all that arises from environment and upbringing, relations to parents, the values and pressures of one's society; not to mention the many physical constraints arising from the body. There may in fact be very little scope left for free choice, and the extreme determinist would declare it to be an illusion.<sup>567</sup>

However, the fact that universally people are praised or blamed, rewarded or punished, for their actions indicates that in fact the great majority believe there is an element of free choice in human behavior. As Kant showed, although there is no theoretical argument that could establish the freedom of the will, it is a postulate or presupposition of all morality. It would be senseless to say that one ought to do anything or that society ought to promote certain values if all human actions are determined by factors outside of man's control. It should be noted that similar considerations hold for the exercise of thought. All scientific inquiry depends on the human capacity to make rational judgments, and these are assumed to be based on the discrimination of truth and falsity, not on the operation of heredity, chemistry, etc. Without the freedom of rational judgement, argument becomes impossible. The determinist's own view is not something one has chosen to believe on rational grounds, but the effect of various hidden causes. Like many other forms of skepticism, it is finally self-destructing.<sup>568</sup>

Like many other philosophical disputes, that between the rival views of free will and determinism has some truth on both sides as it would appear. From the moment of birth or even before, every human life is already largely determined by factors that the person in question has not chosen, which will predispose him in one way or another. Yet, since the focus here is on man, not just puppets or highly complex machines, this suggests that there is room for a measure of self-determination, in which the people concerned have a share in shaping the raw material of their personalities and of deciding between the alternatives open to them.<sup>569</sup>

The above Western or "Christian" debate on free will and determinism has no end, and therefore no resolution. This mental expedition and digression is void of definitive scripture — and that may be why the issue has turned circular. Thank Allah (ﷻ) for this Qur'an that brings this long and tortuous topic into focus. The *āyah* here serves to discipline man's thoughts about his freedom of choice and the consequences of actions and deeds in this earthly life of either good or evil works, **"And We have cropped up for Hell numerous jinn and men."** This is a factual statement. When the ac-

countability is concluded on the Day of Accountability there will be hosts of jinn and humans who are fated to go to Hell — *because*,

**...they have hearts with which they fail to grasp the truth, and eyes with which they fail to see, and ears with which they fail to hear. They are like herds [of domesticated animals] — no, they are even less conscious of the right way: it is they, they who are the [truly] heedless! (7:179).**

Obviously when the word *heart* is used in this *āyah* it does not refer to the biological heart; rather what captures its meaning is *sensible mind*. The Qur'an, in other *āyāt*, accentuates this definition of the word *qalb*,

**I will place terror into the hearts of those who deny [My power]... (3:151);**

**Have they, then, never journeyed about the earth, letting their hearts gain wisdom, and causing their ears to hear? Yet, verily, it is not their eyes that have become blind — but blind have become the hearts that are in their bosoms (22:46);**

**And yet, whenever Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who will not affirm the life to come contract with bitter aversion... (39:45);**

**On that Day will [men's] hearts be throbbing (79:8).**

All of these descriptions — *organ of sense, gaining wisdom, bitter aversion, receptacles of terror, and throbbing* — relay the perception of an apprehension accompanied with a consciousness that is related to action.

The word *yafqahūna* means to *grasp the pertinent and applicable truth within context*. Now, as the meaning begins to develop, it be-

comes evident why so many jinn and men will be the assemblages of Hell. They have neither moral sense nor ethical understanding of events in their context. They are much like herds of animals — with only instinctual senses — but unlike the social and moral beings they were created to be. Hence, they can murder with impunity and the mental rationalization for killing trumps whatever is left of their conscience. They can steal the resources of others, presenting fancy arguments for “developmental policies,” and their conscience does not object to that. They can market slaves, prostitutes, and orphans, giving the practice a market justification of sorts, and their conscience, for all practical purposes, is absent. Now, the description of those whose final destiny is the Hellfire can be more fully appreciated — that is, they no longer possess the conscience component of their hearts, minds, eyes, ears, and the other faculties and senses they were endowed with by their Creator.

The host of human descriptions above necessitates a rethinking of who Allah (ﷻ) is. Now is the time to “recollect ourselves” and come to a more nuanced understanding of Allah, the Almighty and the Exalted,

**And Allah’s [alone] are the attributes of perfection; invoke Him, then, by these, and stand aloof from all who distort the meaning of His attributes: they shall be requited for all they were wont to do! (7:180).**

This is a direct stimulation of the human mind and conscience to the descriptions or attributes of Allah, known as His Names, *asmā’ullāh*. The wording, “perfect attributes of Allah,” is mentioned in four *sūrah*s of the holy Qur’an, the first time, as *al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*, here in *Sūrah al-A’rāf*. The second, third, and fourth times occur respectively at the end of *Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl*, at the beginning of *Sūrah TāHa*, and toward the end of *Sūrah al-Ḥashr*,

**Say [O Muhammad], “Invoke Allah or invoke the Mercy-Giver, whichever [one] you invoke, it is to Him that the perfect attributes belong...” (17:110);**

**Allah, there is no deity/authority besides Him — to Him belong the perfect names (20:8);**

**It is He — Allah the Creator, the Molder of all forms and appearances. His [alone] are the attributes of perfection (59:24).**

It has been chronicled that during the Qur'anic prophetic generation, the Muslims would use the word *Allah* at times in their praying and pleading, or at other times the word *al-Raḥmān*. To this, the *mushriks* would say, "Muhammad and his companions claim that they worship one Sustainer; so why does he call upon two [entities]?"<sup>570</sup> And this *āyaḥ* responds to their dissembling, saying that these attributes (names) belong to one God, and do not designate separate or many gods.

Since all the honorable attributes that typify the best meanings belong to Allah (ﷻ), human beings are encouraged to use these noble attributes to call upon Him, to entreat Him, and to praise Him. In this regard, there are *āyāt* of acknowledgment and praise,

**Allah! There is no deity/authority except He — the Ever-Living, the Ever-Maintaining... (2:255);**

**Allah is He save whom there is no deity/authority: the One who knows the unperceived and the perceived; He is the Mercy-Giver, the Merciful (59:22).**

*Asmā'ullāh al-ḥusnā* are also called Allah's Divine Names. They are the names by which Allah (ﷻ) is known in Islam, and are divided into two categories: the Names of His Essence (*al-dhāt*), such as *Allah* and *al-Raḥmān*; and the Names of His Qualities (*al-ṣifāt*), such as *al-Raḥīm* and *al-Bāri'*. They can also be divided into the Names of Mercy, or Beauty (*jamāl*); and the Names of Aura, or Majesty (*jalāl*). These attributes altogether are called the Most Perfect/Beautiful Names (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*), "To Him belong the Most Beautiful/Perfect Names."

These Names consist of those directly revealed in the Qur'an, those derived indirectly from certain passages in the Qur'an, and those from the wording of the Prophet (ﷺ). Not included are certain descriptions that are distant grammatical derivations from revealed Names. The Name *Allah*, called the Supreme Name (*al-ism al-a'zam*), stands alone. A prophetic hadith says, "To Allah belong ninety-nine Names..."<sup>571</sup> Accordingly, these Names are:

1. *al-Awwal* – the First (57:3);
2. *al-Ākhir* – the Last (57:3);
3. *al-Aḥad* – the One (112:1);
4. *al-Badī'* – the Originator (2:117);
5. *al-Bārī'* – the Fosterer (59:24);
6. *al-Barr* – the Beneficent (52:28);
7. *al-Baṣīr* – the Ever-Seeing (40:20);
8. *al-Bāsiṭ* – the Expander (derived from 13:26);
9. *al-Bāṭin* – the Inner (57:3);
10. *al-Bā'ith* – the Resuscitator (derived from 16:89);
11. *al-Bāqī* – the Enduring (derived from 20:73);
12. *al-Tawwāb* – the Absolver (2:37);
13. *al-Jabbār* – the Subduer of wrong, Restorer of right (59:23);
14. *al-Jalīl* – the Majestic (55:78), derived from *dhū al-jalāl*;
15. *al-Jāmi'* – the Gatherer (derived from 3:9);
16. *al-Ḥasīb* – the Accounter (4:6);
17. *al-Ḥafīẓ* – the Guardian (11:57);
18. *al-Ḥaqq* – the Truth (20:114);
19. *al-Ḥakīm* – the Wise (6:18);
20. *al-Ḥakam* – the Judge (derived from 40:48);
21. *al-Ḥalīm* – the Cordially Tolerant (2:235);
22. *al-Ḥamīd* – the Praiseworthy (14:1);
23. *al-Ḥayy* – the Ever-Living (20:111);
24. *al-Khabīr* – the Well-Experienced (6:18);
25. *al-Khāfiḍ* – the Abaser (from a hadith);<sup>572</sup>
26. *al-Khāliq* – the Creator (13:16);
27. *Dhū al-Jalāl wa-al-Ikrām* – Full of Majesty and Generosity (55:27);
28. *al-Ra'ūf* – the Passionate (2:143);

29. *al-Raḥmān* – the Mercy-Giving (55:1);
30. *al-Raḥīm* – the Merciful (2:143);
31. *al-Razḏāq* – the Provider (51:58);
32. *al-Rashīd* – the Competent (derived from 72:10);
33. *al-Rāfi‘* – the Raiser (derived from 6:83);
34. *al-Raqīb* – the Vigilant (5:117);
35. *al-Salām* – the Peace (59:23);
36. *al-Samī‘* – the Ever-Hearer (17:1);
37. *al-Shakūr* – the Grateful (64:17);
38. *al-Shahīd* – the Witness (5:117);
39. *al-Ṣabūr* – the Forbearing (from a hadith);<sup>573</sup>
40. *al-Ṣamad* – the Reliance (112:2);
41. *al-Dārr* – the Afflicter (from a hadith);<sup>574</sup>
42. *al-Zāhir* – the Manifest (57:3);
43. *al-‘Adl* – the Justice (from a hadith);<sup>575</sup>
44. *al-‘Azīz* – the Invincible, the Grand (59:23);
45. *al-‘Azīm* – the Great (2:255);
46. *al-‘Afuww* – the Pardoner (4:99);
47. *al-‘Alīm* – the All-Knowing (2:32);
48. *al-‘Alī* – the High and Lofty (2:225);
49. *al-Ghaḥfūr* – the Much-Forgiving (2:235);
50. *al-Ghaḥfār* – the Evermore Forgiving (38:66);
51. *al-Ghanī* – the Self-Sufficient (2:267);
52. *al-Fattāḥ* – the One who gives access (34:26);
53. *al-Qābid* – the Withholder (derived from 2:245);
54. *al-Qādir* – the Capable (17:99);
55. *al-Quddūs* – the Holy (62:1);
56. *al-Qaḥḥār* – the Vanquisher (13:16);
57. *al-Qawī* – the Strong (22:40);
58. *al-Qayyūm* – the Self-Subsistent (3:2);
59. *al-Kabīr* – the Enormous (22:62);
60. *al-Karīm* – the Magnanimous and Noble (27:40);
61. *al-Laṭīf* – the Subtle (42:19);
62. *al-Mu‘akḥḥīr* – the Deferrer (derived from 14:42);
63. *al-Mu‘min* – the One who reciprocates commitment (59:23);
64. *al-Muta‘āli* – the Self-Exalted (13:9);



65. *al-Mutakabbir* – the Lordly (59:23);
66. *al-Matīn* – the Firm (51:58);
67. *al-Mubdi'* – the Initiator (85:13);
68. *al-Mujīb* – the Responsive (11:61);
69. *al-Majīd* – the Glorious (11:73);
70. *al-Muḥṣī* – the Recordkeeper (derived from 19:94);
71. *al-Muḥyī* – the Giver of Life (30:50);
72. *al-Mudhill* – the Humbler (derived from 3:26);
73. *al-Muẓīl* – the Diminisher (derived from 10:28);
74. *al-Muṣawwir* – the Image-Giver (59:24);
75. *al-Mu'īd* – the Restorer (derived from 85:13);
76. *al-Mu'izz* – the Honorer (derived from 3:26);
77. *al-Mu'tī* – the Giver (derived from 20:50);
78. *al-Mughnī* – the Enricher (derived from 9:74);
79. *al-Muqīt* – the Maintainer/Determiner (4:85);
80. *al-Muqtadir* – the Able (54:42);
81. *al-Muqaddim* – the Enhancer (derived from 50:28);
82. *al-Muqsit* – the Equitable (derived from 21:47);
83. *al-Malik* – the Sovereign (59:23);
84. *Mālik al-Mulk* – Owner of the dominion (3:26);
85. *al-Mumīt* – the Author of death (derived from 15:23);
86. *al-Muntaqim* – the Avenger (derived from 30:47);
87. *al-Muḥaymin* – the Controller (59:23);
88. *al-Nāfi'* – the Benefactor (derived from 48:11);
89. *al-Nāṣir* – the Victor (derived from 3:150);
90. *al-Nūr* – the Light (24:35);
91. *al-Hādī* – the Guide (22:54);
92. *al-Wāḥid* – the Singular (74:11);
93. *al-Wadūd* – the Loving (11:90);
94. *al-Wārith* – the Inheritor (derived from 19:40);
95. *al-Wāsi'* – the Vast (2:268);
96. *al-Wakīl* – the Trustee (6:102);
97. *al-Walī* – the Patron (4:45);
98. *al-Wālī* – the Ally (13:11); and
99. *al-Wahhāb* – the Bestower (3:8).<sup>576</sup>

The Names listed above represent abstractions belonging to or characteristic of the majesty and infinite reality of Allah (ﷻ). In a synergistic, interactive, and helpful way, the Qur'an directs man's understanding of these words to whatever limited extent he can through the agency of his human language, his human perception, and his human experience. This *tafsir* will not delve into the age-old argument of whether the meanings of these words belong to Allah as "essence" or as elucidation; or belong to His "working will." Being only human, man's reasoning can only go so far. It is futile to argue how, to what extent, and with what shade of meaning these descriptive words relate to the Almighty. Nonetheless, without declaring he has a categorical understanding of these Names, man with his God-given mind can get "a feel" for the meanings of these words so long as he does not encumber what he can grasp with internal contradictions, incompatibilities, or fallacies.

Hence, a good starting point is to not impute to Allah (ﷻ) what He has not said of Himself. Thus man cannot say that God is a comrade, a philanthropist, or is brainy, etc, for He did not describe Himself with those attributes (words), **"And stand aloof of all who warp the meaning of His manifestations [attributes]."** Some people have been known to dislodge a God-given description into a slant of their own impassioned predisposition to prejudice and emotion. A case in point is the likely slant the pre-Islamic Arabians gave to scriptural words. Thus, from the word *Allah* they derived *al-Lāt*, from the word *al-'Azīz* they cast *al-'Uzzá*, and from *al-Mannān* (traceable to *āyah* 49:17) they coined *Manāh*. Note that each of these derivatives is feminine; so there may have been at one time a push to identify the feminine gender on par with divinity. Deviation comes in many forms.

Another way of skewing Allah's attributes is to give them a figure or bodily representation. Let it be known that Allah's *asmā' al-ḥusná* are exclusively His; they are exhaustive of every meaning of beauty, perfection, and love combined, without any contradiction whatsoever. The combined meaning and understanding of His attributes necessitate His independence while they render all created entities His dependents.

All of Allah's attributes, when omitting the article *al-* (*the*), can be used as words describing humans — with the exception of the word *Allah* and the attribute *al-Raḥmān*. There are some subtle areas here that should be noted. In understanding Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), it is known that Allah heals, therefore it can be said that He is a healer. But it cannot be said that Allah is a doctor or a physician. Similarly, it is known that Allah creates human beings, but it does not follow that Allah gives birth. Allah knows the future, but it is not appropriate to say that Allah is telepathic or psychic.

When people call upon Allah (ﷻ), pray to Him, and ask Him for their well-being and recovery, they should use these attributes to do so. So if they were to ask Allah for provision and sustenance it would be appropriate to mention the corresponding attribute *al-Razzāq* (the Provider). Or if they are asking Him for mercy, they would be a step ahead if they call upon Him by His mercy descriptives: *al-Raḥmān*, *al-Raḥīm*, *al-Wadūd*, etc.

Our *du'ā'* can only be to Allah (ﷻ). He alone is our ambition during the time we turn to Him for whatever reason,

**Nay, but who is it that responds to the distressed when he calls out to Him, and who removes the ill [that caused the distress], and has made you inherit the earth? Could there be any divine power besides Allah? How seldom do you keep this in mind! (27:62).**

The following hadith corroborates this meaning,

*Whoever is visited by trouble or distress or any significant affair should say, "There is no deity/authority except Allah, the Magnificent, the Compassionately Tolerant; there is no deity/authority except Allah, the Lord of the resplendent throne; there is no deity/authority except Allah, the Sustainer of the heavens and earth, and the Lord of the noble throne."*<sup>577</sup>

In another hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ), speaking to his daughter Fāṭimah, said,

*What can bar you from listening to what I have to pledge to you? Say morning and evening, “O Ever-Living [God]! O Self-Subsistent! I entreat You by Your grace — do manage my affair, and do not leave me to myself for as much as a blink of an eye.”*<sup>578</sup>

Man can praise, honor, and exalt Allah (ﷻ) by seeing to it that His attributes and names are used specifically for Him. He can also praise, honor, and exalt Allah by refraining from stretching, “spinning,” or “twisting” definitions of words into the absurd, such as, for example, saying that Allah is the father of Jesus (ﷺ), or that Allah is a father, a son, and a holy ghost all in one, **“They will be requited for all that they were wont to do.”** They swerve away from Allah’s oneness, uniqueness, and singularity by attributing a child to Him. Therefore, their understanding of Allah’s divinity and authority is warped. Expressions and descriptions are followed by attitudes and behavior. And man shall be held accountable for the mental attitude and social behavior that come from inaccurate words and misleading descriptions.

Some people place the will of Allah (ﷻ) within the physical laws they have discovered in nature — as if He can be confined by these modular and mechanical laws. Then there are those who compare Allah’s works to what man can do — even though they are well aware of the fact that He says there is no one like Him. Still others think of Allah as a deity belonging to the heavens that may be in charge of running the vast universe, and that may be expected to appear on a final day of judgement, but when it comes to matters and social issues here on earth, He does not belong. They tell us that God has no authority or no business interfering in the way man runs his own community and society, that the social, legal, and international affairs of humanity should be left to the minds, experiences, and interests of men as interpreted and analyzed by man himself. Within this way of looking at things man has become his own god — and, as a result, a few people overlord others. All this amounts to a distortion of who Allah is. We, the committed Muslims, have nothing to do with these mental image manipulators. In the mean-

time, our challenge is to continue cementing our knowledge through our conscious understanding and behavioral struggle, while having the confidence that those detractors will wind up reeling from the consequences of their inadequate theories and sorry practices, which they themselves chose and then institutionalized.

### The Meaning of *Truth* and *Justice*

The developing meanings now lead to the all-important bloc of people who are to be found somewhere on earth trying their best to stand guard and move Allah's word of honor forward,

**And of those We created is an *ummaḥ* that guides [others] via the *ḥaqq* and with it they do justice. And those who misrepresent Our [power] manifestations We shall gradually lure them — in a stealth manner. I will dictate to them that My scheme is ironclad (7:181–183).**

It may be redundant to say there are many establishments, nations, systems, and networks that have taken issue with Allah (ﷻ) and set out on a generational journey to tend to the affairs of this world without even a slight consideration of what He has to say about pertinent issues. What is barely noticed is the fact that within the human race there will always be a consolidated effort to stand for truth and justice. This *āyah* gives them their day in court, as it were. Allah attests to the fact that they exist and work His will. Whatever their numbers may be they lead the way to truth and justice. They are not isolationists, pacifists, or unapproachable. Similarly, they cannot be called elitists just because they champion justice, honesty, and legitimacy. The more justice-conscious they are, the more they are perceived to be serving the needs of the people. The more they see governments and societies being led in the wrong direction, the more “fired up” they become to put people back on track with Allah. Naturally, such an attitude puts them in a leadership position. They are not satisfied with a mental or theoretical recognition of justice — they want to see justice done.

And they do the things that result in an expansion of social and economic justice. But before they involve themselves in the pursuit of justice, they ensure they are in possession of the *ḥaqq*. *Al-Ḥaqq* is a divine attribute. Usually it is translated as *the truth*. But the word's range, in addition to *the truth*, encompasses both *legitimacy* and *impartiality*. The secular language of the West and the religious tradition of Judeo-Christian context will have to be filtered of the vocabulary pollution that stands between the contemporary Muslim and the understanding of the *ḥaqq*.

In the Western world, both secular and religious, the word *truth* has different meanings in different kinds of discourse. The truth of a mathematical proposition and that of an empirical proposition are obvious examples of different kinds of truth. Similarly, there are different criteria for testing different truths. In the case of a mathematical truth, whether it is deducible from the fundamental axioms of the mathematical system in which it appears needs to be checked. In the case of an empirical proposition, there are many possible procedures, some very simple, some highly complex. If someone asserts, for example, "It is raining," the matter can be simply settled by looking out of the window. If it is claimed that Julius Caesar was assassinated on the ides of March, then the veracity of the claim calls for much more complicated procedures. Perhaps it could be said in every case, however, that a proposition is true if it demonstrates things as they really are.<sup>579</sup>

In the non-Qur'anic mind, religious and theological statements make a claim to be true. Here, the first move for the scripturally detached thinker is to ascertain the meaning of what is being asserted, as religious language is in this context frequently symbolic or even mythological. It may look like an empirical assertion, but may be quite different, so that the first task in any assessment is a hermeneutical one. Suppose someone says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This looks like an assertion about the past. But what meaning is to be given to the phrase "in the beginning"? Or how is one to understand the verb *created*, a strange metaphysical verb without parallels in ordinary experience? If the interpretation of religious assertions is the first step toward assessing their truth, the

second must be the development of a religious epistemology (the philosophical theory of knowledge). This implies that the question of truth in religion or theology in the West has to be put in the context of an entire philosophy of religion.<sup>580</sup>

*Epistemology*, a word combining *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (discourse), refers to human thought dealing with the theory of knowing. It explores the methods of knowing, the presuppositions and grounds of what is affirmed as knowledge, and its reliability and limits. Plato (427–347BCE) originated epistemology in response to the Sophists' skepticism about uncritical pre-Socratic views that knowledge was possible. He provides in his *Dialogues* one of its most comprehensive treatments, exploring the limits of sense experience for knowing, the relation of language and knowledge, a theory of forms to explain the possibility and limitation of knowing, and a critical method for deriving what may be provisionally affirmed as knowledge by means of a rigorous dialectical process within a community of interpretation.<sup>581</sup>

The epistemology of Aristotle (384–322BCE), departing from Plato and his theory of sense knowledge as an abstraction of absolute forms, posits universals that exist essentially in and shape matter, impress themselves on the human soul or mind through sense experience, and become knowledge through the intellectual activities of imagination and judgement. This view led to the continuing problems of the relation of universals to matter, to particulars, to the mind, and the status of universals with reference to reality and God, illustrated in Neoplatonic thought, in the European medieval debates over realism and nominalism, and in the opposition between rationalism and empiricism in early modern thought.<sup>582</sup>

In the critical epistemology of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), knowledge is limited to the phenomenal realm, where sensation shaped by categories of understanding becomes experience. Judgements about the noumenal (inaccessible to experience) reality underlying the phenomenal are based on practical or teleological considerations and cannot be regarded as objectively valid knowledge. The idealist epistemology stimulated by Kant led to a reaction of uncritical common sense repressed by G.E. Moore (1873–1958),

who held up his hands, saying, “Here is one hand, and here is another,” as proving external reality. Logical atomism and logical positivism represent a similar lack of critical epistemology. Linguistic analysis and ordinary language thought limit their focus and avoid the uncritical naivete of predecessor movements.<sup>583</sup>

The most promising epistemological directions today may be the ones built on the history of human thought and reaching toward a post-critical perspective. They are represented by C.S. Peirce (1839–1914), who related knowing to human purposes within communities of interpretation; A.N. Whitehead (1861–1947), with a relational epistemology akin to Plato’s; Michael Polanyi (1891–1976), who showed the cultural and personal dimensions inherent in the entire range of human knowing, from scientific to historical; and H. Richard Niebuhr (1894–1962), whose epistemology integrates theology and ontology (metaphysics), history, and society, into what is affirmed as knowing and knowledge in human communities.<sup>584</sup>

The word *truth* is used in everyday conversation without difficulty. Yet, in looking at the history of thought in the West, there are many different conceptions of truth. In a lengthy article on truth José Ferrater Mora (1912–1991) asserts that term is used primarily in two senses: to refer to the truth of a proposition or statement and to refer to a reality. When it is said that a proposition is true, this notion is opposed to that which is false. When it is said that a reality is true, this notion is opposed to what is not apparent, illusory, unreal, nonexistent, and so forth.<sup>585</sup>

The ancient Greek philosophers, according to Mora, identified truth as a permanent reality, regardless of whether this reality was thought to be material substance, numbers, primary qualities, or ideas. As that which is permanent, truth was contrasted with what is changing, which is only apparently true, although not necessarily false. The Greeks often maintained that truth was accessible only to thought. They conceived of truth as pertaining to the discovery of what a thing is, to its essence. Truth as *aletheia* was the uncovering of being, which is hidden by appearances.<sup>586</sup>

The *locus classicus* of truth understood as the truth of propositions or statements is found in Aristotle,



To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true (*Metaphysics*, Book 4, Part 7).

This statement does not differ greatly from what Plato had already said in the *Cratylus* where Socrates asks if “a true proposition says that which is, and a false proposition says that which is not” (see also Plato’s *Sophist*).<sup>587</sup>

Another quite early view of truth in the Western world, according to Mora, was that developed by the “classical” Hebrews who viewed truth (*emunah*) as that which is faithful, or which keeps or will keep its promise, namely God. This means that, in contrast with the Greek idea, truth for the Hebrews was not something static, but found in this,

It was this people’s consciousness of possessing a truth that must be transmitted; its consciousness that it existed in order to bear witness to that “future” truth — among the great powers and, if need be, against them.

José Ferrater Mora’s work shows that one could view the entire history of thought according to the different theories concerning truth. Varying formulas and theories were propounded not only in the ancient world but during the European Middle Ages and in the modern as well as in the contemporary period.<sup>588</sup>

Probably the best-known theory in the West of truth, the one that seems to make the most common sense to the general public, is the so-called correspondence theory of truth. In its simplest form, the theory involves the correspondence between what one says and what is talked about, namely between the proposition or statement and things, or, as it is sometimes expressed, between a statement and reality. During the European medieval period this notion of truth was discussed in great detail. Truth was seen not only as the correspondence or conformity of things with the mind, which meant that things were intelligible, but also as the conformity of the mind with things. For example, St. Anselm (1033–1078), fol-

lowing the Aristotelian tradition, discusses truth as the truth of statements, but he also asserts that the truth of things corresponds to their ideas in the mind of God — the “supreme truth” and cause of all other truths. God, the supreme truth, then, is the cause that makes the correspondence between things and the mind possible. Maintaining a similar view, but giving greater emphasis to the truth residing in statements, St. Thomas Aquinas defines truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus* (correspondence of the mind and reality).<sup>589</sup>

A correspondence theory of truth does not necessarily include such notions about God. For example, the theory developed by the modern logician Alfred Tarski (1901–1983), known as the semantic conception of truth, is a form of the correspondence theory. Tarski maintains that the expressions *is true* and *is false* are meta-logical. In an artificial language, the correspondence is between the meta-language and the object language. Another well-known theory of truth is the coherence theory upheld by idealists, where single statements are only partial truths. In its more extreme versions, these partial judgements are “absorbed” or synthesized into a whole, so that, for example, Hegel can say that the truth is the whole. Theories of truth and refinements on these theories abound. William James, for example, developed the so-called pragmatic theory of truth, which involves the notion that a statement is true if it works, is able to predict something, solves other problems in science, and can be validated. These different theories show that truth can be conceived in a variety of ways: absolute or relative; eternal or changing, and so forth.<sup>590</sup>

Perhaps some of the most provocative and influential views on truth have been those developed by 19th- and 20th-century thinkers who reject the traditional notions of truth as correspondence and as intellectual, and who deny that there is a straightforward antithesis between truth and falsity. Consider the notions of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) who asks on what basis man can talk about truth if the traditional source of all truth, namely God, is dead! Nietzsche links the ideas of truth and goodness to that which encourage or cause life to flourish while falsity is that which stifles life,

The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it... The question is, how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps species-rearing.

This biological or evolutionary view of truth maintains that struggle, delight in one's own power, and exploitation, are life-furthering, while the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition of chastity, meekness, "turning the other cheek," concern for the neighbor, and so forth are thought to be denial of life. Viewing life as a struggle to survive and to assert oneself, Nietzsche apparently did not consider the value of cooperation — a characteristic that at least some biologists consider responsible for the great reproductive success of the human species.<sup>591</sup>

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) also rejects the traditional view of truth, although he claims that he is going back to the original Greek understanding. In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger tries to show that the correspondence theory of truth is a development of a more primordial truth — as *aletheia* or *uncovering*. Heidegger claims those entities that are uncovered in the world are true but only in a derivative sense. What is primarily true, what is truth, is *Dasein* itself, the term Heidegger uses to refer to human reality. Thus rejecting the notion that truth is a value found primarily in statements made by man, Heidegger claims that "*Dasein* is 'in the truth.'" These ideas are reformulated by Heidegger in his essay "On the Essence of Truth" where he asserts that "The essence of truth is freedom." He acknowledges that this sounds strange since freedom is usually considered a human property, but he holds that "Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be"; that is, freedom "lets beings be the beings they are." This letting-be can be and has been understood in different ways: it could be interpreted, for example, as a way of behaving that would please environmentalists, but it is still a rather puzzling theory to be held by a thinker who supported the political rise of Adolf Hitler.<sup>592</sup>

In so far as he expressed a kind of contempt or disinterest in the correspondence theory of truth, Heidegger was in agreement

with his Danish predecessor, Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), who also dismisses the traditional correspondence theory of truth, which he calls *objective truth*. Kierkegaard rejects any kind of truth that involves the detachment of the person seeking the truth. Thus he rejects the importance of mathematical and scientific truths, precisely those branches of knowledge that are generally thought to be the most certain. He has little interest in scientific or objective truth since he considers that this “truth is always abstract.” Objective truth or knowledge for Kierkegaard is “accidental” and its “degree and scope is essentially indifferent.” Sooner or later objective truth is reduced to a tautology (a statement that is true by necessity or by virtue of its logical form), to the logical form “a or not a” or “not both a and not a.” One must then turn one’s back on objective truth, which means one must reject the supreme principle of objectivity, namely the law of non-contradiction.<sup>593</sup>

Kierkegaard does not deny the certainty of objective truth, but the truth he seeks is precisely that truth that is based on objective uncertainty, what he calls *essential truth* or *subjectivity*. He claims that “All essential knowledge relates to existence.” For Kierkegaard, knowledge must have a relationship to the knower and the knower is the existing individual. Such knowledge is limited to ethical and ethical-religious knowledge. According to Kierkegaard, “The objective accent is on *what* is said, the subjective accent on *how* it is said.” Now this *how* does not express the manner in which a person expresses a truth; it concerns rather the relationship between the individual and this truth. Kierkegaard asserts,

Objectively the interest is focused merely on the thought-content, subjectively on the inwardness. At its maximum this inward *how* is the passion of the infinite, and the passion of the infinite is truth. But the passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and thus subjectivity becomes the truth... Here is such a definition of truth: an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness.”<sup>594</sup>

What does all this mean? For Kierkegaard, objective truth is something indifferent, something outside of the individual, something that can be learned and understood once, while subjective truth cannot be learned in this way since it is not a truth that resides in sentences. Indeed, man does not learn subjective truth, but he must “appropriate” it. By choosing it continually he makes it his own — it is not something he merely has or possesses, but he becomes truth or, what is the same thing, it becomes a part of his existence, that is, he lives this truth.<sup>595</sup>

Furthermore, man must make this truth his own with passion even if this truth is objectively uncertain, involving paradox and absurdity. But this description of truth is Kierkegaard’s understanding of Christian faith. The absurdity of Christianity, for Kierkegaard, is that the infinite becomes finite, the eternal comes into being in time. The paradox of faith is precisely that: if one is capable of objectively proving what one believes, then faith has disappeared and become (objective) knowledge. In order to preserve one’s faith, one must hold on to what is actually repulsive to objective understanding. This is also the risk involved in faith. In fact, Kierkegaard goes so far as to say that “The absurd is precisely by its objective repulsion the measure of the intensity of faith in inwardness.” Faith involves a further paradox since it is only when one feels oneself to be nothing before God that one becomes — to the greatest extent possible — a (true) individual.<sup>596</sup>

Once one has faith or becomes an individual, then since the individual is “higher than” or superior to the universal, which refers to universal ethical rules, then one can, in “fear and trembling,” suspend the universal. To explain his meaning, Kierkegaard uses the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac (سجدة). For Kierkegaard, this story shows,

...what a tremendous paradox faith is, a paradox which is capable of transforming a murder into a holy act well-pleasing to God... for faith begins precisely where thinking leaves off.

The story illustrates what Kierkegaard calls the “teleological suspension of the ethical.”<sup>597</sup>

One might agree with Kierkegaard in differentiating faith from knowledge and in pointing out that faith contains an element of doubt — at least in the Judeo-Christian mind. One might also agree that religious faith contains a higher truth than scientific truth. So far, Kierkegaard might be saying nothing more than St. Thomas Aquinas, who maintained that certain truths, like that of the trinity, cannot be understood by human reason but are a matter of revealed truth, the highest truth, a mystery. But Aquinas would not, presumably, argue that the truth of these beliefs depends on the fact that they cannot be understood by reason; it just so happens that human reason, being finite, cannot fully understand them. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, seems to be saying that it is precisely because such truths are by their very nature not intelligible that they are true. He has, presumptively, carried the distinction between knowing and believing too far and with his dismissal of all that is rational, and his belief that in certain circumstances — even if these are very special and unusual circumstances — one can “suspend” the ethical, he opens the door for the justification of all kinds of abuses.<sup>598</sup>

The other inherent meaning of *ḥaqq* is *legitimacy*. In our time, the Western sense of this word carries the day. Thus, legitimacy in 20th-century politics, philosophy, and history is the view that systems of government either are or ought to be justified, and not simply based on coercion. There are two versions of the theory of legitimacy, one deriving from political philosophy, the other from history and political science. The first seeks principles that would oblige people to obey government, and then uses those principles to assess existing regimes as worthy or otherwise of being obeyed. The second treats a belief in the legitimacy of regimes as a common feature of government, however distasteful any particular regime may be to the observer. It then examines legitimacy as a historical phenomenon rather than engaging in moral appraisal. The two approaches are often thought to be incompatible, but are in fact complementary.

The long dispatch into the Western Judeo-Christian indeterminate understanding of truth and legitimacy leaves the Muslims in an advanced appreciation of what Allah (ﷻ) offers them in this settled and certain Scripture. How remote and how unpredictable can the human mind become when it has no divine reference point on such concepts. That is why when the secular and materialistic West picks up on its fluctuating definitions of truth and legitimacy, it cannot come to grips with a solid understanding and practice of justice. To these types, it is a theory of the “morally” appropriate way of resolving social differences. But then they have not just one theory of justice. One view is that justice involves avoiding or preventing harm to people; another that it involves treating people according to what they deserve; another that people should be treated according to their needs; another that they should be treated according to fair and impartial procedures.

Justice, according to most Western philosophers, starting with Plato, is the harmonious balance between the rights of the various members of a society. Justice is usually understood as including such social virtues as fairness, equality, and correct and impartial treatment. But how can any of this become the basis of society and the main element of social life when there is no certainty in the human components of society?

This is where the Qur’anic contribution to the world ought to be much treasured and satisfying. The Islamic understanding of *ḥaqq* comes from Allah (ﷻ) who does not second guess social problems, is not lacking in knowledge, does not speculate about particular assumptions, and is Himself the Creator of life and existence, thereby eclipsing any philosopher or combination of philosophers along with their theories and ideologies,

**And of those We created is an *ummaḥ* that guides to the *ḥaqq* and with it [the process of guiding to the *ḥaqq*] they do justice (7:181).**

This *āyah* means that the acquisition of this *ḥaqq* comes through a lively interaction with people to guide them to Allah (ﷻ). It also

means that stagnant and inactive “Muslims” disqualify from acquiring the *ḥaqq*, and thus they disqualify from implementing social justice.

What is required, therefore, is a consolidated group of people (an *ummah*) that will carry this responsibility into its social dimension. And to do that, they will have to be in charge of society, which in turn requires them to be ruling with the moral character and the legal behavior endowed by Allah (ﷻ). Hence, this *ḥaqq* (truth, legitimacy, and fairness) was never meant to be studied as much as it was meant to be implemented. This *ḥaqq* does not present itself through the Scripture and Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) to turn into sermons, lectures, and preaching. This revealed *ḥaqq* aims at engulfing man as a social being. It targets the social and legal values of society itself. Through the implementation of this *ḥaqq*, the people’s perception of God is corrected. Through the effectuation of this *ḥaqq* there is no longer a hostility or tension between man and God. And there is a minimum of ill will. A paucity of procedures that violate justice would be sacked under an Islamic rule of law. Most of the world’s people are fed up with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer as a global Western led transcontinental problem is about to explode in their faces — and why? Because the uncertainty in the hearts of ideologues and the doubts in the minds of philosophers have brought all humanity to the brink.

Around 1750, the Industrial Revolution began in Britain, with key technologies such as the steam engine, and initially in the textile industry. Industrial development followed in other countries in the 19th century, including France, Germany, and the United States, and led to the rise of the economic system known as capitalism. As the tools of industrial manufacturing were created, a person with money to invest could seek out the latest leading-edge inventions and develop a more efficient factory, thus appropriating market share from now outdated rivals. Instead of slowly amassing wealth over a lifetime, there was now a systematic way to amass wealth relatively quickly. This new method of accumulating wealth through capital investment was called capitalism; a capitalist invests money in an enterprise with the objective of receiving more in return than what was initially invested.<sup>599</sup>



The Industrial Revolution and the growth of capitalism brought unparalleled growth in economic output and in population, but also substantial dislocation of agricultural populations, destruction of natural environments, and very often harsh conditions for workers. All of this internal European capitalist new direction was being pursued when the European armies and armadas were extending their military reach into Muslim lands from the Dutch occupation of Indonesia, to the Portuguese occupation of parts of Africa, to the grand colonization by both Britain and France of the majority Muslim lands from the Far East (for example, Malaysia) to the Near East (such as places like Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt).

In response to both the unprecedented productivity of capitalist systems and the ills they brought about, a variety of socialist and utopian ideas arose in the late-18th and the 19th century. Among early socialists were F.N. Babeuf (1760–1797), proponent of class conflict; the utopian Robert Owen (1771–1858), creator of cooperative communities; and Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864), a founder of the first workers' party in Germany in 1863.<sup>600</sup>

The principal historical figure in the history of socialism was Karl Marx (1818–1883), who, along with Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), conceived the theory and tactics of revolutionary proletarian socialism, which became known as Marxism. Marx was primarily concerned with the dynamics of capitalism and the historical laws he believed would cause its replacement, rather than with the structure of a socialist system. His most famous work, co-written with Engels in 1848, was the *Communist Manifesto*, which outlined a theory of class struggle and the revolutionary role of the proletariat. His greatest work was *Das Kapital*, published in three volumes (1867, 1885, 1894). Marx's doctrines influenced the creation of numerous communist states and their associated command economies, where all economic decisions are dictated by the central government.<sup>601</sup>

During this time period there were no Islamic thinkers who could locate their minds into the meanings of this Qur'an and offer public opinion the social laws that are outlined here in this sacred Text. Even now, many decades into the confusion of Western pun-

ditions and intellectuals, Qur'an-reading Muslims are still at the academic level — at best — unable to move these Qur'anic meanings of *ḥaqq* and *ʿadl* into the fabric of their own societies, much less to offer a solution to other societies stretched from exploited labor in southeast Asia to slave labor in Africa to virtually all countries of the world.

Capitalism continued as the world's primary economic system, and increased trading between countries in the early-20th century helped to create a more connected global economy. The business cycles of local economies began to have worldwide effects, and when the US stock market boom of the 1920s turned bust on October 20, 1929 ("Black Tuesday"), it helped to throw the fragile global economy that was still recovering from World War I into a deep worldwide depression.<sup>602</sup>

At the depths of what came to be called the Great Depression, in 1931, world industrial production was 38% less than what it had been in June 1929, and there were an estimated 30 million unemployed people worldwide. This single year saw countries descend into mass unemployment and hunger, the breakdown of international exchange, and the failure of great financial institutions. The "recovery" that began in 1932 brought the world economy back to life by 1937, due to increased governmental deficit spending and the country-by-country abandonment of the gold standard. But the global economic downturn had lasting effects on all it touched, and helped to sow the seeds of World War II in Europe.<sup>603</sup>

Where were the Qur'an-informed Muslims during this time? And the quick answer is that they were not yet to recover from hundreds of years of separating mind from Qur'an. The separation of reason from revelation still lingers on to this very day in a very substantial way. The more horrific part of it is that there is a religious corporate-clan in Arabia that stifles any attempt at enriching the human mind with the divine meanings contained in this Qur'anic compendium.

Partly in response to the mass unemployment of the Great Depression, most advanced nations today have market systems with some form of social safety contingency. Markets are generally

subject to standards of openness and disclosure to ensure competition, and there are prohibitions against unfair labor practices and environmental damage. Social welfare programs date back at least to Germany in the 19th century; in the United States today these programs include Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The developed European countries almost all have substantially larger social welfare programs than the United States. In addition, many developed economies have government-subsidized agricultural sectors, and some have subsidized banking and industrial enterprises; there is continuing pressure to improve productivity by eliminating such subsidies.<sup>604</sup>

But still the capitalist world is moving toward a humanitarian tragedy. The microeconomics, the microeconomic system, the producers, the markets, pricing, and the allocation of resources, the natural monopolies, and public goods are all cooked up and calibrated to produce creeping poverty, the destruction of a “middle class,” and the fantastic accumulation of phenomenal amounts of wealth in the hands of the elites. Regulation and deregulation, price incentives, and social security programs are all failing to tame the capitalist competitive-turned-combative corporate world that is now, as these words are written, virtually “on top of the world.” Gross domestic product and national income are more the possession of the corporate elites than the working people. Employment’s wages are on a reduction scale, while profit output for the corporate managers and chief executive officers is on an expanding scale. Labor forces are gradually slipping into slavery conditions, the unemployment rate is eroding future expectations, productivity and economic output favor the capitalists while prices and inflation are weighing down heavily on the lower classes in the West and the underclasses in the rest of the world.<sup>605</sup>

In the absence of an Islamic realignment of the economic world, everyone — Muslim and non-Muslim alike — is heading for another Great Depression or worst yet, a global economic meltdown. Fiscal policies per the capitalist script are exponentially increasing the numbers of the world’s hungry and arithmetically increasing the elitist crowd. There are no longer government expenditures

and tax policies that are going to bandage the hemorrhaging capitalist structure. The institutions for economic development such as the World Bank; the Group of Eight (G8), a loosely knit group of the largest economic powers whose representatives meet once a year to discuss and influence global economic policy; the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a 30-member group formed to promote economic growth, employment, and improved standards of living through the coordination of economic policy; and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a sister organization to the World Bank charged with making loans to nations having trouble with debt, are showing serious signs of failure, and the world now does not have any “socialist” or “revolutionary” theories or ideologies that will move in and save the day.<sup>606</sup> Man is at a historical crossroads; and if the world fails while we Muslims have this Qur’an in our possession we will be condemned for not offering the world the answer to its social justice problems, and we will be condemned for suffering the same consequences as all other people who are poised to go under when the global economic meltdown begins to happen.

This *dīn* is apparent, unambiguous, and accessible about Allah’s attributes, about those who occupy a historical and contemporary irreconcilable position to Him, and about those who are in the global field trying to “fix the problem” in light of the Qur’an and the Sunnah. And because the world is approaching a defining moment in its history, and because this *dīn* is the only solution left, those who are bent on giving the lie to Allah’s genuine and truthful messages have gone into their frenzied strategies and put on their military gear to bring the sons and daughters of this Islam to their knees. Is it any wonder that there is an information industry that is churning out all types of lies and innuendo about Islam, the Prophet (ﷺ), and the Islamic state and movement? The “international capitalist system” and all its subsidiaries, the governments in Muslim countries in particular, have gone demonic. They are all in a concerted effort to try to kill off even the most relatively insignificant attempt at Islamic self-determination. Every time there is a prospect for success concerning a particular section or component

of the Islamic movement in the world there is a vicious and cannibalistic response from the corporate and elitist quarters of the world with all the militaries and finances at their disposal.

They even recruit “Islamic scholars” to do the “intellectual” and propaganda jobs for them. These “*court-‘ulemā’*” who have ripped themselves away from the spirit of Islam and from the Qur’an in context act as a peculiar line of defense for the corporate elites and the elitist corporate materialists. Toward that end these “scholars for the highest bidders” try to turn the law and spirit of Islam against the vanguards of tomorrow’s coming Islamic worldwide change. They can do harm only to themselves. In due time they will be exposed for all to see. These paid scholars are quick to whip an individual adulterer but they are infinitely slow at identifying the prostitution industry that markets the *ḥarām* and the *fāḥishah* as a profession. Under the tonnage of an inferiority complex these salaried scholars are impressed by material modernity and want the Muslims to catch up with the rest of the world. And how is that? Do they want the Muslims to acquire their own industrial infrastructure? Of course not. Do they want the Muslims to be able to think for themselves and have their independent think tanks? Of course not. Do they want the Muslims to form their own economic commonwealth and enjoy their God-given resources? Of course not. Do they want the Muslims to break away from dependence upon capitalism and whatever other exploitative “-ism” there is? Of course not.

Then what do they want? They want the Muslims to catch up with the modern world by undressing their wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. They want the Muslims to “refine” themselves by becoming a consumer society tied to the exploitative and demeaning strategies and five-year plans of the master class, and in some cases the master race. These mercenary Muslim scholars opine that there is no use; Islam in its once glorious history was its own master. The Muslims once ruled themselves, but now every lecture or book about Islamic governance or Islamic self-determination is obsolete and outdated. They insist that a civilized Muslim nowadays is one who has tailored his Islam to acts of devotional worship and personal piety; all this talk about an ideological will and a political

Islamic future is nonsense. That is what they say in their roundabout manner and also in their flagrant language. They want Islam to fit into the status quo, not rock the boat — live and let live, as the saying goes. Islam, according to these mouthpieces should endorse the running injustice and live side by side with tyrants and injustice.

There is a real war going on. The enemies are real and the battle is raging. And so, let there be no ambiguity or confusion in anyone's mind,

**And of whom We have created there shall be an *ummaḥ* that leads by [virtue of] the *ḥaqq*, and with that they do justice. And those who trifle with the truth pertaining to Our *āyāt*, We shall bring down in a manner they cannot perceive. I will dictate to them that My design is ironclad (7:181–183).**

No one is going to leave the Muslim Ummah alone when it sticks to the truth and sets out accordingly in the pursuit of justice. All the militaries in the world and their societal structures that cannot tolerate the word *justice* are going to do whatever they can to prevent this Ummah from doing justice. At this point their gloves come off; they fulminate with fighting words, all the while sneaking in some slick propaganda. Their bullets are directed at annihilating the physical Muslim while their words are tailored to overwhelm the rational Muslim. This is more than obvious from the contemporary polarization between an Ummah that is standing up on its own feet and trying to walk the course of justice, and a globalizing corporate order that feels incensed when Muslims dare to challenge its high-handed and imperious corporate complex of covetousness, greed, and capital concentration. The Third-World status, as it is called, of the Muslim world is meant to stifle any promising Islamic movement that, once consolidated and properly oriented, can rearrange the world without corporate capitalism and its military lines of defense.

It is encouraging to see how this *dīn* has withstood the combined forces of *kufr* in ways that defy understanding. Would that

there were hundreds of millions of committed Muslims, instead of two billion ritual and ceremonial Muslims. But this should be no cause for despair, as those few committed Muslims are breaking new ground with their God-given truth and the justice system that frames it. Imperialism and Zionism — despite all they have done to abort Islamic justice in the cradle in the manner of all-out war, serial dislocations, scorched-earth cities, economic sanctions, stereotyping, and drone terror from the skies — have achieved few measurable results. They can only revel in the fleeting exultation of delaying the inevitable. Little do these imperialist and Zionist comrades in arms realize that committed Muslims are a reflection of the Almighty's will. And Allah's will assuredly surmounts the muscular might of truth deniers, justice deniers, and hence God-deniers, **“And those who tell lies about Our āyāt We shall deal with gradually — without them sensing it. I will dictate to them that My strategy is unshakable.”**

This element of Allah's presence within the struggle of committed Muslims is something the imperialists and Zionists will never be able to understand. All the committed Muslims have to do is identify the truth, extend its meaning into social justice, and then remain united and steadfast in the pursuit of justice. Doing this ensures Allah's involvement. It works to the Muslims' advantage that the injudicious powers who speak falsely of Allah (ﷻ) are unable to detect this fact. These powerful truth deviators are oblivious to the fact that their actions and political programs, accompanied by their hot and cold wars, are leading them to the day of reckoning with Allah. They think that God has no “strategy.” And they also think that He cannot “fight back.” They think their grand imperialist-Zionist alliance is invincible, and within this frame of mind they dismiss Allah as a power to be factored into anything they do.

This has always been the social law of Allah (ﷻ) that brings the deniers of Allah's power and authority to their ruin. Just because they now have the apparent temporal power, calling themselves “superpowers” to boot, they think they are impregnable and unbeatable. This very psychology is what will lead them to their

own demise. And who is it that brings them to their downfall and devastation? It is Allah — the Almighty, the all-Powerful. Blind to and ignorant of this central fact of life, they cannot be convinced of a powerful and forceful God. Thus, the final outcome shall favor those who have always been aware of Allah's power and authority — those who lead by truth and by truth they do justice.

### **The Wondrous Earth**

Recall that the Qur'an here is speaking about and confronting a class of God-deniers in Makkah. They were never reconciled to the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is the only power and authority on earth and elsewhere. Even though that Makkan milieu was the immediate locus of these meanings, the larger target, which still applies, cannot be dismissed. The Qur'anic text is expansive enough to bring into its fold all those who are described by its all-inclusive meaning. The deniers of Allah's power were served divine ultimatums because they were in an active mode of hostility against people who discovered the truth and its extended meaning of justice. Within this dynamic the words of Allah attempt to stimulate their minds, open their eyes, and invigorate their souls. The God-deniers from Makkah are asked in this holy Writ to meticulously consider what the Apostle (ﷺ) is telling them, lest they become the substance of Hell due to their ineptitude and incompetence. They are divinely advised to consider the dominion of the heavens and earth and all the demonstrations of Allah's power therein. They are also advised to be cognizant of the lapse of time and how that brings them ever closer to their unexpected expiration.

**Do they not think? Their companion [Muhammad] is not possessed [by unseen beings]. He is but an evident warner. Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and earth and whatever else Allah has created? And it may be that their time is running out! In what discussion will they, after this, have faith? (7:184–185).**



The Qur'an is trying to shake off their lethargy, moving them into a higher sensitivity of the world around. This is a Qur'anic attempt to salvage their human nature, their God-given minds, and their motivations from the weight of traditions, the past, and social customs, **“Do they [the deniers of Allah’s power] not think? Their confrere [Muhammad] is not possessed! He is but a manifest warner.”**

One method of psychological warfare is to discredit the enemy. And during the life-mission of the Prophet the elites of Makkah tried to damage the reputation of Muhammad (ﷺ) by saying he is influenced or controlled by a powerful jinn. Accordingly, that was why he spoke the way he did; to them, his words were strange, unconventional, and sacrilegious.

The Makkan Qurayshī elites knew they were lying. Many reliable historical narrations relate that these elites had a strong sense of who Muhammad (ﷺ) was, that there was something original and authentic about him. They themselves could not withhold their temptations to listen to the Qur'an and be moved by it. The story about al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq, Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, and 'Amr ibn Hishām (Abū Jahl) — when they once set out to secretly listen to the Qur'an for three nights and how they really felt about it — is very well known in the books of *Sīrah*.<sup>607</sup> Also in the books of *Sīrah* is the incident pertaining to 'Utbaḥ ibn Rabī'aḥ who listened to the Prophet's recitation of *Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* and how it profoundly moved him.<sup>608</sup> These elites knew that the Qur'an was divine and thus would use the Hajj season to distract people's attention from what the Prophet had to say and from his recitation of the holy Book. Al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, thus, could only comment on the Qur'an by saying, “It [the Qur'an] is foremost a form of wizardry.”<sup>609</sup>

All these narratives put together indicate that the *mushriks* of Makkah knew very well the sublime and heavenly content of the Qur'an. Their problem was less the inability of their minds to detect the excellent and outstanding quality of the Qur'an than their ego, which resisted this superlative and sterling Qur'an. These elite rulers of Makkah were afraid that if the Qur'an was to become popular they would lose their positions of power, their seats of authority, and their personal privileges. They knew that the message

of the Qur'an would dethrone their nomadic rule in Makkah and they would cease to be its lords.

These Makkan *mushrik* elites drew on their own culture and traditions that considered any talk of the distant future, any prediction of coming events, and any knowledge of the “unknown” to be the domain of the jinn; and so if Muhammad (ﷺ) is speaking about these “future” and “metaphysical” things then he must be getting his information from these jinn. This accusation of Muhammad being influenced by the netherworld was just another elitist ploy to disgrace the holy Prophet.

The Qur'an in this atmosphere shook up these elites. It reminded them that they knew Muhammad (ﷺ) before he became a prophet and they knew him afterward: in both cases they knew a man who is original, authentic, and genuine. They attested to his trustworthiness and veracity. When they could not agree on who among them is going to replace the Black Stone where it belonged after the reconstruction of the Ka'bah, they called on Muhammad to be their arbiter, and they were impressed with his wisdom.<sup>610</sup> They even entrusted Muhammad with their belongings and deposited them with him until he was finally forced to leave Makkah, at which time he was so upright that he had his cousin 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib return those possessions to their rightful owners.<sup>611</sup>

The Qur'an was exhorting them to rethink themselves and profess the truth about a man they knew very well — exceptionally well. Was this man disturbed, was he demented, or was he possessed by some jinn? Can this Qur'an be a madman's book? A lunatic's action plan? Of course not, **“Their fellow is not under jinn control... he is but a plain warner.”** There is no disturbance in his mind nor in his speech. He is an eloquent communicator of warnings — and this sets him apart from all the elite's attempts at defamation.

**“Do they not consider the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever Allah has created?”** This heavenly Qur'anic sentence came down to the Makkan deniers of Allah's power and authority, knowing that they were just nomads who were not acquainted with science of any kind. And still they were spoken to in a way that would induce their thinking. Hence, even those with

minimal scientific knowledge, once they use their minds and hearts to look at the expansive universe, can come to a reckoning of Allah's power and authority. Furthermore, it follows that this Qur'an has come to those with information and technology beyond that of Makkah 14 centuries ago to agitate their body of scientific information to a degree that helps them recognize Allah (ﷻ) as the Creator and the Source of all things heavenly and worldly. The more knowledge, the more science, the more data man collects the more it makes sense to acknowledge the majesty of Allah. Consider, therefore, the level of scientific information available today and how it sits with the guiding truth of the Qur'an — the Creator's final word to man on such matters.

Earth is the living planet, unique in the Solar System — being the only planet with intelligent life that scientists are aware of. The chances of life flourishing on other planets are boosted by the knowledge that there are over a billion stars in just our galaxy — each with many orbiting planets — and some 200 billion galaxies in the universe.<sup>612</sup>

Life and life-support systems on Earth are sustained by heat and light from the Sun, even though the amount intercepted by the planet is only 0.002% of the Sun's total output. That life exists on Earth is partly due to Earth's distance from the Sun. Planets adjust their surface temperature to ensure a balance in the amounts of energy received from the Sun, absorbed by the planet and re-radiated back into outer space. In this way a planet neither gains nor loses heat in the long term. Since the amount of heat received from the Sun diminishes with distance from it, the farther away a planet orbits from the Sun, the lower the surface temperature needed to achieve its heat balance. As a result, Mercury is intensely hot, while the more distant Neptune is extremely cold.<sup>613</sup>

Scientists recognize a limited “life zone,” or ecosphere, around a star in which life can develop if other key conditions, such as a protective atmosphere, are fulfilled. This zone is where the surface temperature of planets lies within the range for water to circulate in all of its three states — solid, liquid and vapor. Mars with its super-cooled ice marks the outer edge of the ecosphere and Venus with its

superheated steam lies at the inner edge. Earth, the “water planet” — with oceans permanently covering some 70% of its surface — is in between, thus allowing the vital water cycle to operate.<sup>614</sup>

The planet’s atmosphere plays a role, too, in determining whether its surface favors life. Greenhouse gases — water vapor, carbon dioxide, and methane — trap outgoing heat and act like an insulating blanket, raising surface temperature above the value determined simply by distance from the Sun. Although the Moon is a similar distance from the Sun, it lacks an atmosphere so the average surface temperature is a freezing 3 °F (−16 °C), compared with Earth’s average of 59 °F (15 °C).<sup>615</sup>

Neither are the atmospheres of the other planets in the Solar System conducive to life in its human manifestation. Mars’ atmosphere is so thin that its greenhouse gases make little difference to its surface temperature of about −108 °F (−78 °C). Venus’ dense atmosphere is saturated with carbon dioxide, forced out of its carbonate rocks by intense solar heat. Levels of carbon dioxide reach 96% — compared with Earth’s 0.04% — and a surface temperature of 896 °F (480 °C) results.<sup>616</sup>

The mix of gases in the Earth’s atmosphere is strikingly different from other planets, with large amounts of oxygen and nitrogen. This differs radically from what would be expected from the physical processes of planet development. It seems that life has modified the Earth’s initial atmosphere to suit its own survival. Biological organisms extracted large amounts of carbon dioxide from the early atmosphere through photosynthesis for use by plants, phytoplankton, and blue-green algae while releasing oxygen for animal consumption.<sup>617</sup>

To maintain optimum warmth, the Earth manipulates not only the composition of the atmosphere but also the living planet’s surface. Changing the area covered by clouds or vegetation alters the amount of solar energy reflected. In this way life-support systems behave like global thermostats. If temperatures rise, more evaporation generates more cloud cover, which reduces the amount of sunlight received by the surface, so restoring the temperature balance.<sup>618</sup>

Computer simulations of the nascence of the Solar System, illustrating the birth of the planets by cataclysmic collisions between hundreds of swirling chunks of debris, suggest that the Earth's position relative to the Sun in the ecosphere is not random. These images reveal that a planet similar to Earth in size usually forms at about its present orbital distance from the Sun. Such a result suggests where to seek out life around other stars.<sup>619</sup>

Distance from the Sun may initially have been a critical factor for life to begin — although chemical reactions were still vital to make the carbon compounds from which bacteria could eventually evolve. From that point on, it appears that life on Earth has influenced its own destiny by changing the environment to suit itself. Its purpose seems to be to increase the complexity, intelligence, and diversity of biological organisms. A great variety of plant and animal species is encouraged by the existence of seasons caused by the angle of tilt of the planet's axis. This remains fixed in space as the Earth orbits the Sun, so that each hemisphere tilts toward and then away from the Sun, thereby allowing for warm summers and cold winters in middle and high latitudes.<sup>620</sup>

Interaction between life and the environment has resulted in the evolution of a number of complex and powerful cycles including those of water, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, and sulphur. Cycles of life and death ensure energy and nutrients are passed along food chains as soil microorganisms, bacteria, and fungi regenerate nutrients after the death of a plant or animal. These self-regulating cycles interrelate to maintain suitable conditions for the living planet to be true to its name.<sup>621</sup>

Life-support systems are now under threat. Human activities are polluting the environment, eroding soils, destroying habitats, depleting natural resources, and causing the extinction of a great many plant and animal species. For too long man has acted without due consideration of the consequences of his actions. It is now time for him to recognize his responsibility toward safeguarding the future health of the Earth. Attempting to increase his understanding of the complex workings and intricate systems sustaining the living engine that is his planet is a beginning. And this beginning shall

never mature into a developed and balanced cohabitation between man and his environment without recognizing the guidelines set forth in this sacred Scripture.<sup>622</sup>

Neil Armstrong, the first person to walk on the Moon, described the Earth with its deep blue oceans, brown-green continents and swirling veil of dazzling white clouds as “a beautiful jewel in space.” But probably what makes it unique is that intelligent life cohabits this small planet and, as far as secular science goes, the only planet out of trillions across the universe. The young Earth provided all the conditions for carbon-based life to evolve: protective atmosphere; organic chemicals; circulating elements, including water in its three states; volcanic activity to link crust and atmosphere; and a surface temperature at which the appropriate chemical reactions could take place.<sup>623</sup>

Planet Earth seems an insignificant body in a vast universe, which was created, according to the Big Bang theory, when a concentration of energy and matter exploded apart some 14 billion years ago. Observations of the most distant stars show it is still expanding. Scientifically speculating, around 4.6 billion years ago one of many swirling clouds of gas, or nebulae, in the universe formed a star — the Sun — at its center. The surrounding dust grains joined together to make nine orbiting planets and smaller bodies such as moons, asteroids, and comets. The Earth’s moon is unusually large and is probably an embryonic planet that failed to grow and compete as a planet in its own right — as some scientists have put it.<sup>624</sup>

The fast-moving inner planets — Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars — have relatively thin atmospheres, since the Sun’s heat boiled away lighter materials. The larger outer planets — Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune — retained the lighter gases and have solid cores surrounded by vast cold atmospheres of methane, ammonia, helium, and hydrogen. Pluto, the tiny outermost planet (reclassified as a “dwarf planet” in 2006), has a highly eccentric and steeply inclined orbit, which means it is sometimes closer to the Sun than Neptune.<sup>625</sup>

The immense size of the universe, with its 200 billion galaxies, is not easy to grasp. Light traveling from the Sun to the

Earth at 186,000 miles/s (300,000 km/s) takes 8.3 minutes to travel the 93 million miles (150 million km). By contrast, light from the Moon takes only a second to reach the Earth. At the other end of the scale, to traverse the Milky Way would take 100,000 years traveling at the speed of light.<sup>626</sup>

This whole integrated and functional collection of galaxies and nebulas, stars and planets, asteroids and moons, solar dust and debris, all these could not be arranged at random or haphazardly. There is an Arranger and Organizer who in His infinite knowledge calibrated the masses, the distances, the material, the quality and quantity, the gravitational pulls, the temperatures, the orbits, and much more in a way that sustains this celestial system as well as life itself. Any “scientific” theory or talk about this aforethought, measured, and designed universe has not even “progressed” to the juvenile stage.

**“And it may be that their own term [on earth] is about to end.”** Looking at the universe through discoveries and explorations, it is known that planets are born and then expire. Does it not behoove man to realize that his individual as well as his planetary life is going to expire? How can man find the moment in life to try to run away from an impending eternity? How can a person break from God in an interval of months and years, only to find himself relocated into the span of eternity? **“In what discussion, after this, will they believe in?”** Cannot a thinking mind realize that the facts herein, in this Qur’an, issue from an Authority that has the final word on such matters? A thinking mind located in a vital soul is all that is required to acknowledge Allah’s authority and perceive His power.

After all the scriptural and scientific facts gel together, only a hard core denier of God can walk away from the body of evidence pointing to Allah’s authority and power,

**For those whom Allah lets go astray, there is no guide;  
and He shall leave them in their unbridled arrogance,  
blindly stumbling to and fro (7:186).**

The mechanism of going into God-denial is not hard to understand. Man initially chooses to disregard what Allah (ﷻ) tells him, then he chooses to replace Allah with his man-made authorities and deities, and this is what drives his mind, heart, and soul — his entire being — to avoid responding to Allah. Thus, he wanders into the wilderness of intellectually guessing himself into a state of mental confusion and psychological depression. It is not that Allah (ﷻ) prefers or favors this conduct. Rather, some people intentionally choose this irreconcilable position with Him. And they are left by Allah to go their own way. They do so for whatever short years of life they have been granted, ultimately heading back to accountability for a false choice they made when they were free to do so, **“And He leaves them wandering back and forth in their excessive ostentatiousness.”**

### **Importance of the Concept of *Ākhirah***

Curiosity, the strong desire to learn or know something, in this context appears to be the escapist preference for those who are more interested in the distant future than with their immediate concerns and productive work. A committed Muslim's future is embedded in his preoccupation with his pressing responsibilities. But those with either a lazy or feigned commitment begin to ask the type of questions that will not elevate the level of their commitment but cast doubt on the veracity of the Prophet (ﷺ). Here, the question was posed to the Prophet about the final earthly hour, man's last day on earth, and the beginning of the resurrection that ushers in the Day of Judgement. These characters were having problems pinpointing and visualizing their own times, yet they wanted a certainty about the end times,

**They ask you [O Prophet] about the Last Hour  
“When shall it arrive?” Say [to them], “Verily, the  
knowledge of its timing rests with my Sustainer; none  
but He will reveal it in its time. Heavily will it weigh  
on the heavens and the earth; [and] it will not fall**



upon you otherwise than of a sudden.” They will ask you — as if you could gain insight into this [mystery] by dint of persistent inquiry! Say, “Knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer alone; but [of this] most people are unaware.” Say [O Prophet], “It is not within my power to bring benefit to, or avert harm from myself, except as Allah may will [that to be]. And if I knew that which is beyond the reach of human perception, abundant good fortune would surely have fallen to my lot, and no evil would ever have touched me. I am nothing but a warner, and a herald of glad tidings to people who will commit [to Allah] (7:187–190).

The fact that there is a life to follow this life, and the public consciousness of this fact are two cognitive states that were absent from Arabian society at the time of this Qur’anic revelation. The *mushriks* of Arabia had a mind that was void of the concept of the *ākhirah* — the final life that follows this worldly life. This element or dimension of scriptural commitment was part and parcel of the Ibrāhīmī and Ismā’īlī *dīn* that the Arabians claimed to be theirs, but this aspect of the eventual life in the world to come was neither a part of their mindset nor a consideration in their daily lives. The lapse of time and the effects of customs and culture had taken their toll on the Arabians who, although claiming to be followers of Ibrāhīm and Ismā’īl (ﷺ), were unconcerned with the notion of the *ākhirah*. The whole concept was basically alien to them; this is how far afield they had conceptually gone from the *dīn* of Ibrāhīm and Ismā’īl. When Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came with his God-given communication and spoke to them about death and the life that follows they were flabbergasted. The concepts of resurrection, general assembly, accountability, and compensation or punishment were daring and unpracticed. This fact is highlighted in other *āyāt*,

**As against this, they who are bent on denying the truth say [to all who are of like mind], “Shall we point out to you a man who will tell you that [after your**

death], when you will have been scattered in countless fragments, you shall — lo and behold! — be [restored to life] in a new act of creation? Does he [knowingly] attribute his own lying inventions to Allah — or is he a madman?” No, [there is no madness in this Prophet] — but they who are not convinced of the life to come are [bound to lose themselves] in suffering and in a profound aberration (34:7–8).

One of the qualifiers of the Islamic Ummah to bear witness over the rest of mankind is that it maintains a strong and vibrant consciousness of the life to come. Any nation that is earth-centered, earth-limited, and earth-ending in its mind and conscience is destined to exhaust its worth in this life and world without any prospect in the coming life and world. There is no doubt that a person who lives in this world, knowing he is in transit, is a person whose horizon is much more expansive and happy than he who lives in a life that begins at birth and ends at death. A person who awaits and anticipates final judgement and final justice is much more enduring in his lifetime than a person who thinks that everything is over on the deathbed. A person whose vision extends beyond limitations of flesh and blood is not going to be crushed by a temporary dilemma nor is he likely to become ecstatic at a transient moment of pleasure and delight. A person who looks forward to the *ākhirah* is more willing to sacrifice and more able to weather the exigencies of “bad luck” in life. A person who is psychologically settled in the God-given life that follows will do whatever is required in this abating and fading life.

In all truth, the firm conviction in a life of eternity that follows this life of impermanence is a major distinction between humans disposed to Allah (ﷻ) and others who are inclined to sensualism and materialism. Humanity’s responsibility is to live a covenant with Allah; and humanity will fail if it cannot anchor in its public mind the inevitability of the life that follows this one. What distinguishes the people of Islamic commitment is that not only are they certain about the *ākhirah*, but rather their confidence in the *ākhirah*

is stronger than their presence here in this world. This truly is the qualifier that distinguishes an *ummah* of the *ākhirah* from nations and cultures that are indifferent to this central concept.

Through the moving *āyāt* of this precise Book, those people who pose a question that virtually mocks the concept of the *ākhirah* actually educate, in a sense, the committed Muslims. Their inquiry is disrespectful and sarcastic, **“They ask you [O Muhammad] about the [final] Hour — when shall it cast anchor?”** Any individual living in the company of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) knows that the final earthly day of human life is of an unknown timing. Only Allah’s knowledge is aware of the exact time of its occurrence. He has not given this precise knowledge to any among His created beings. Nevertheless, there were (and are) people in denial of God coming to the Prophet and asking him about its timing. This question may have been posed with ulterior motives to judge the worth of the Prophet, or it may have been raised to deride him.

Remember, the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) was a human being who never said that he had consummate knowledge of the unknown future. Rather, the Prophet taught that the future is a divine affair, and the details thereof are left to Allah (ﷻ). The Prophet’s knowledge was what he received from Allah. Otherwise, he remained a receptive prophet. Thus his answer was accurate and timely, **“Say [O Muhammad], ‘Knowledge of it [the Final Hour] rests with my Sustainer alone. None but He will reveal it in its time.’”** This places all the arguments about the Final Day in their true perspective.

Allah’s words in this impeccable Qur’an advise man to be more concerned with the essence and characteristics of the Last Hour than with the exact time it sets in. He should feel how immense and overwhelming that last earthly day will be, how consuming a shadow its appearance shall cast. He should understand that it will weigh very heavily on everyone once it happens; even the material planetary and cosmic worlds will feel its force. When it does take place it will be a surprise, especially to the revelers who were oblivious to it, **“Heavily will it weigh on the heavens and the earth; [and] it will not come to you except by surprise.”**

After reading this, the people attuned to Allah (ﷻ) will have to prepare for a day that will come abruptly and unexpectedly. No amount of caution will be able to buffer the approach of that day. Hence, the only beneficial thing that can be done now is to gear up and be ready for that foreseeable day. No one really knows exactly when this day will dawn; therefore, everyone's life pattern should be shaped by the inevitability of its advent. The Qur'an projects an air of wonder and skepticism about those who express an interest in knowing the exact timing of such a day yet harbor an attitude and behavior that could not care less for it.

**“They will ask you — as if you could gain insight into this [mystery] by dint of persistent inquiry!”** Their inference here is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was subsumed by a “burning desire” to discover and then disclose its timing. But, in fact, the Prophet was not entreating Allah (ﷻ) to reveal His specific knowledge of the future, **“Say [O Muhammad] ‘The knowledge of its timing rests with Allah [alone].’”** This should have been enough for the listeners to refer this matter to Allah's infinite knowledge. All Islamic historical literature concurs that no one has been given divine access to the precise timing of the Final Day.

**“But of this most people are uninformed.”** Allah's knowledge is not just peculiar to this future final day; rather His knowledge is inclusive of all aspects of the *ghayb* (the unseen, the extrasensory, the unknown). There may be instances when Allah (ﷻ) gives a prophet or other person access to developments far or near into the future. And so, given that He is the one who knows and man does not, then man is in no position to reject divine knowledge of future or past events that He alone has the capacity to divulge. When man is humble enough to contrast what he knows with what he does not know, he will begin to realize that the cumulative amount of his acquired knowledge is not even a drop in the ocean compared to absent knowledge.

With all the love of Allah for Muhammad (ﷺ), and with all the honor He has imparted to him, still the latter is ordered by Allah (ﷻ) to declare to the public that he is only human. The Prophet does not have the knowledge of the unknown that Allah

has. He cannot access the indefinable and the unperceived at will. Thus he does not have the type of knowledge that can preempt the developments of the future,

Say [O Prophet], “I am not in control of benefit or harm that comes my way, except as Allah may decide with authority. And if I knew that which is beyond human perception I would have augmented good worth, and would not have been touched by trauma” (7:188).

This is a parting line between divinity and humanity. Allah has the acquisition and apprehension of the unknown, and no human being — even Muhammad (ﷺ), the closest human being to Him — has anything but the faintest impression of the *ghayb*. Allah’s words on the matter, repeated by His beloved Prophet, are “I am nothing but a warner and a herald of glad tidings to people who are committed [to Allah].” The Prophet was commissioned to warn and break good news to all people; however only those who are committed to the Almighty will benefit. They will be the ones who do good and thereby gain from this Prophet all of what he has to say. The Qur’an and this Prophet open up to those who themselves are openminded about the former.

In shedding more light on this *āyah* there is a historical narrative pertaining to the Yahūd. In Madinah, they are said to have approached the Prophet (ﷺ), saying, “If you are a prophet, then tell us about the Last Day, when shall it come to pass?”<sup>627</sup> Another narrative holds that it was the *mushriks* who came to the Prophet with the same question.<sup>628</sup> Other *āyāt* reflect a couple of attitudes by those posing the questions: either skepticism and suspicion about such an “end day” or just outright denial,

And they say, “When is this prediction going to happen, if you are telling the truth?” (34:29);

Those who are not convinced of it [the Last Day] are anxious for it to happen; and those who are convinced

of its occurrence are in trepidation [of it]; and they know it is reasonable [and legitimate]. But of course those who argue about the actuality of the Last Day are in a distant deviation (42:18).

Additional *āyāt* pertaining to the Hour include,

...And they [the doubting *kāfirs*] ask, “But when is it [the Final Hour]?” Say [O Muhammad] to them, “It might be close by” (17:51);

Certainly, Allah has the knowledge of the Last Day and He brings down water-relief [from above]... (31:34);

To Him shall the knowledge of the Final Day be referred, as is the case with fruits emerging from their blossoms... (41:47);

...And for all you know [O Muhammad], the [Final] Hour may be near! (42:17).

The “Hour” in these *āyāt* has the general meaning of the Last Day on Earth and the specific meaning of man’s expiration day, that is, the day of his death. A quote from the Prophet (ﷺ) also points to the general onset of this Final Day,

*The Final Day shall not come to pass until the Sun rises from [the place of] its sunset. When it does rise and people see it happen all people will say they are believers. When that happens no faith shall avail its adherent unless faith superseded this development and did him some good. The Final Day shall approach as two men display a garment for transaction but then fail to sell and buy. The Final Day shall approach as a man has just cupped his dairy but then does not ingest it. The Final Day shall approach as a man puts the final touches on his drinking water basin but then does not drink from it. The*

*Final Day shall approach as a man raises his hand with food to his mouth but then does not eat it.*<sup>629</sup>

The non-disclosure of the Final Day's timing may be analogous with the non-disclosure of a person's day of death. When the timing is unknown the assumption is that it could happen at any moment. And so if that is the case, people are going to have to stay alert and assume that it is sooner rather than later. This assumption helps the committed Muslim guard against the corrective justice associated with Allah's ever-present power.

This clear Qur'anic guidance is blurry in the minds of many because of the superfluity of Judeo-Christian perceptions about the "End Times." Their lexicon calls it an *eschatology*, the branch of theology that deals with death, judgement, Heaven, Hell, and the final destinies of individuals and of the cosmos. Generally speaking, in archaic religions, the worshipers looked to the past. In their myths and rituals, they recalled certain primeval happenings, which they took to be paradigms and which they repeated or imitated in their own experience. This type of religion induced a sense of timelessness as the cycle of events was repeated again and again.<sup>630</sup>

At some point in time and in some places, akin to the current Judeo-Christian mental attitude, a shift took place in the focus of attention from the past to the future. This happened in Israel (as well as in some other cultures) and the change of perspective obviously brought important consequences. As soon as people began to look forward to an end as well as back to an origin, they were expelled from the timeless realm of archetypes and thrust into time and history. Life came to be understood as not just the unending repetition of the past but the passage to the new. No doubt some writers have exaggerated the contrast between cyclical and linear conceptions of history, and even in Israel something of the cyclical element remained in the observance of annual festivals, including the Passover. Nevertheless, a fundamental shift had taken place, affecting even the consciousness of time.<sup>631</sup>

There is some evidence to show that both in cultures and in individuals the early stages are relatively timeless. But as awareness

of the future develops, consciousness of the passage of time increases and time seems to pass more quickly. The sense of urgency and of the shortness of the remaining time among the early Christians, who had a very acute eschatological awareness, is a good illustration (1 Corinthians, 7:29).<sup>632</sup>

Insofar as eschatology in the Old Testament is concerned, looking back to the origins of their people, the writers of the Old Testament believed that God had already promised to Abraham (ﷺ) a land, a nation descended from him, and a great destiny (Genesis, 12:1–3). Though these writers were reading their own beliefs into the past, it seems clear that from very early times the people of Israel had a future orientation, and this orientation remained throughout their history. Their expectations might seem to have been fulfilled when David (ﷺ) established his kingdom, but this achievement turned out to be shortlived. Nevertheless, the eschatological expectation remained and took new forms. The Prophet Amos (8th century BCE) spoke of a Day of the Lord, and most commentators think that this was an idea not invented by the prophet but already current among the people. In popular expectation, there was coming a day when God, who had delivered Israel in the past, would decisively intervene to bring victory, peace, and prosperity. Amos, however, warned that because of the sins of the people, the day of the Lord will be a day of doom and judgement, rather than a happy festival (Amos, 5:18).<sup>633</sup>

In the following centuries, successive prophets kept alive the expectation of a decisive divine intervention and alternated between promises and threats, depending on the faithfulness or lack thereof of the people. Chief among these prophets was Isaiah, who was at work in Judah not long after the ministry of Amos in the north. In Isaiah, there emerges the notion of a coming wise and able ruler of the house of David, under whom the nation will prosper (Isaiah, 9:2–7; 11:1–9). Sometimes there is a mythological element, the promise of a “golden age” when wild animals will lie down with tame ones (Isaiah, 11: 6–7) and the desert will blossom abundantly (Isaiah, 35:1–2). But for the most part, Isaiah’s expectation was this-worldly. The time of the ideal ruler would be one of



justice, good government, freedom from oppression, plentiful harvests, and peace. But in the Book of Isaiah too, this happy outcome depends on the faithfulness of the people. He connects the happy assurance of Yahweh's intervention on behalf of his people inseparably with the profoundly serious reality of the judgement that must threaten the people so favored. The day on which the messianic kingdom would be established would be the same as the day on which all unrighteousness would be judged, "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low..." (Isaiah, 2:12).<sup>634</sup>

At a later time Jeremiah, though believing that the nation was doomed because it had broken the covenant, held out the prospect of a new covenant (Jeremiah, 31:3–4). In the times of all these preexilic prophets, the coming age is within history and continuous with what has gone before. Though this teaching looks for a decisive moment in the future, it is eschatological only in a very broad sense of the term. But in any case, the destruction of the Hebrew kingdoms and of the Temple itself put an end to such hopes.<sup>635</sup>

During the postexilic period (538BCE–1CE), the immediate form of the eschatological expectation was that of a return to the Holy Land and a revived nation centered on a rebuilt Temple. When these hopes came to nothing, the eschatological expectation became increasingly otherworldly and supernaturalistic. This led to a new form of eschatology, called "apocalyptic," which appears in the Old Testament in the late Book of Daniel, and then in much of the intertestamental writings. In its lurid symbolism and its grandiose expectations apocalypticism is so far removed from the relatively sober eschatology of earlier times that one can hardly refrain from the suspicion that it represents an escapism from the harsh realities that had befallen the Jewish people. Of course, one may counter that this is evidence for a continuing faith in the sovereignty and good purposes of God. What the apocalypticist looked for was not an ideal age or a restoration in the life of Israel, but a transformation of the entire cosmos and a new age of a different order from the one that had gone before. Such an age would be inaugurated not by a

king naturally descended from David (✠) but by a preexistent supernatural figure from heaven who would judge the earth and set up the final rule of God. Another important development that belonged to the intertestamental period was the emergence of a definite belief in a life beyond death. This is generally supposed to have happened in connection with the Maccabean wars (167–160BCE). Many young men were dying for the sake of the faith of Israel, and it seemed unjust that their early deaths should be the end of the story. If there was a just God, surely God would raise them from the dead and take them to a divine home.<sup>636</sup>

In the New Testament, both the apocalyptic expectations and a belief in the resurrection of the dead seem to have been widespread among many Jews at the time of Jesus (✠), and he presumably shared them and was looking for the imminent inbreaking of the Kingdom of God. It is very unlikely, some Christians would say, that he identified himself with the “son of man,” but the identification was made by his disciples, probably after his “resurrection,” and in the earliest days, they are found to be expecting his speedy return to judge the world and establish the “New Age.” According to some Christian writings it seems clear that St. Paul, in the early stages of his “apostleship,” believed that the end would come very soon, probably in his own lifetime. The end, of course, did not come, and this must have been a serious challenge to those who had been expecting it. St. Paul seems to take the view that it had been postponed until Israel too had been gathered into the Christian fold (Romans, 11:25–26).<sup>637</sup>

Nevertheless, the discomfort and even mild rebelliousness felt by Christians who were disappointed by the nonoccurrence of the “second coming” of Jesus (✠) is reflected in the complaint recorded in a late book of the New Testament, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation” (2 Peter, 3:4, Revised Standard Version). St. John’s Gospel (end of first century) says virtually nothing about the second coming of Jesus or a future eschatological moment. Perhaps the coming of the Holy Spirit is considered to be the return of

Christ, while it is also taught that the judgement of the world is going on now, and that the believer has already entered into eternal life (John, 5:24; 12:31; 14:16).<sup>638</sup>

The general tendency in the history of Christian theology has been to postpone the last things to an indefinite and remote future. This, however, is to deprive them of the urgency that was the reason for their importance in the early days of the church. Only on rare occasions, in some enthusiastic individual or sect, has the expectation of an immediate end flared up. This situation has been constantly muddled because the Platonist idea of the immortality of the soul has been inconsistently intertwined with the biblical expectation of a resurrection of the dead, and the belief in an interim judgement of each individual at death has been brought in to supplement the expectation of a final judgement in the remote future.<sup>639</sup>

This Judeo-Christian background “culture” may have induced the individuals who came to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) to ask him about the Final Day. They were anticipating some type of response that would fit into the *kitābī* scheme of thinking. But the *āyāt* came down to make it abundantly clear that the Final Day remains within Allah’s — and only Allah’s — knowledge. No Muslim can “learn” from the tortuous confusion that is represented by today’s Judeo-Christian theology and eschatology, the above being just one example. This is one of the reasons why the radiant Qur’an has no parallel, as the following demonstrates,

1. No one knows for sure the timing of the Last Day, the extent of its severity, or the nature in which it will flare up except Allah (ﷻ), **“Indeed, Allah has the knowledge of the Final Hour...”** (31:34). The Final Hour is inevitable and invariably occurring, **“Certainly, the Final Hour is approaching, there is not doubt about it...”** (40:59). Its time of occurrence is not very remote, **“The Final Hour is approaching; I have willed to keep it undisclosed...”** (20:15). When it does unfold it will be quick and swift, **“The affair of the Final Hour is like a blink or something well-nigh closer...”** (16:77).
2. The Final Day will be a day of gloominess; because of the uncertainty pertaining to accountability there will be a general

feeling of melancholy, apprehension, and depression. The fear of Allah on that Day will be aggravated.

3. The Final Hour shall arrive without prior notice, even as people will be going about their usual and daily affairs. This onset of the Day of Resurrection is called the “Final Hour” either because it will happen quickly, or because the succeeding process of accountability will seem as short as an hour, or because the whole process of accountability will pass by swiftly even though it will be a long one.<sup>640</sup>
4. The Prophet (ﷺ), so far as Islamic historical sources indicate, was not “picky” about when exactly this Day shall unfold; neither was he asking too many questions about it.
5. It appears that the deliberate ambiguity about the exact date of the Day’s arrival serves to inculcate the possibility that it may happen at any moment; and with that being the case, people can better prepare themselves by obeying Allah (ﷻ), asking His forgiveness, and being fair in their relations with others.

Even though the exact date of the Day is not known, the available Islamic literature alerts humanity to the signs or pre-Final Day events that indicate its imminence. Some of them have already taken place, others are still in process, and still others will occur just before the break of that Day. As to the first, the liberation of al-Quds (Jerusalem) and Constantinople has already happened since some time (even though al-Quds is currently under transitory Zionist-imperialist colonization). As far as what is in the process of happening, there is the proliferation of sedition, the appearance of powerful *dajjāl* and *dajjālīm* (anti-Godly ideologies and ideologues); the widespread practice of adultery and fornication; women feeling inferior and then trying to have a reactionary feminism rival masculinity; and the preponderance of individuals and institutions that go public with their God-denial, atheism, and secularization. And finally, what will happen just before the Final Hour strikes includes such indications as a bondwoman giving birth to her matriarch; barefooted and nude primitives competing with each other as they build high-rises, skyscrapers, and towers; sundown becoming sunup.

It is said that the following *āyah*,

Say [O Muhammad] I am not in possession of what benefits or harms me, except per Allah's will; and had I the knowledge of the unknown I would have multiplied affluence and would not have been touched by harm. I am only a warner and a conveyor of good tidings for people who are committed [to Allah's power presence] (7:188),

was revealed in response to the people of Makkah who came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and inquired,

O Muhammad! Does not your Lord advise you about inexpensive and expensive commodities, about the rise and fall of prices — so that we may purchase accordingly and make a profit? Does He not advise you of lands that will lose their agricultural worth so that we may move to more fertile lands?<sup>641</sup>

### End-Time Scenarios as Justification for Aggression and Tyranny

As telecommunications and technological advances are contracting the world more and more into a mental village, the sucker punch of colonialism, imperialism, and Zionism has persisted far beyond its immediate knockout effect, especially with regard to the penetration of Jewish and Christian beliefs and concepts into “developing” societies, with majority Muslim domains being a key target. Jewish and Christian eschatology concerning beliefs about the end of history, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgement, and related matters have washed up on the peripheries of the Muslim mind. Similar concepts are now similarly found in the religions of nonliterate peoples, ancient Mediterranean and Afro-Asian cultures, as well as Eastern civilizations.

By and large, the scenarios for the final days have appeared in two radically divergent forms, distinguished by their attitude

toward time and history. In mythical concepts, so called after their characteristic representations of the eternal struggle between *cosmos* (order) and *chaos* (disorder), the meaning of history is found in a celebration of the eternity of the cosmos and the repeatability of the origin of the world. Historical end-time interpretations, on the other hand, are grounded not in a mythical primal happening but in datable events that are perceived as key experiences fundamental to the progress of history.<sup>642</sup>

Historical eschatology is basic to the Old Testament and thus enters into the structure of faith of those religions, primarily Judaism and Christianity, that draw upon it. Old Testament eschatology consists of the conviction that the Children of Israel were punished with catastrophes because of their disobedience to the laws and will of God. Subsequent conformity to the will of God would result in a return of the Jews to a final condition of righteousness, and moral and material renewal, in which God's purpose would at last be fulfilled. Old Testament eschatology is closely bound to the concept of a redemptive history, in which the Jewish people are viewed as God's chosen instrument for the fulfillment of His purpose, and in which, upon the fruition of God's promises, the Jewish people would be the vehicle for both their own salvation and that of the world.<sup>643</sup>

Christian eschatology is centered around the figure of Jesus Christ (✝) as the anticipation of the future Kingdom of God. Jesus is viewed as the Messiah of God, through whom and by whom the new age of God's redemption is opened. However, the historical development of Christianity was marked by widely differing interpretations and degrees of acceptance of this original eschatology. Distinctions can be made between the hopes of messianism (directed toward a salvational or vindicating figure to come), millenarianism (directed toward the prophesied thousand-year Kingdom of Christ), and apocalypticism (directed toward the cataclysmic intervention of God in history). The eschatological views of Christianity also include a belief in the "restoration of all things," which some Christians, beginning with Origen, have taken to include universal salvation.<sup>644</sup> Because of the influx of this inaccurate information into the

Muslim mind, a broad overview of this territory will be necessary to reestablish the Qur'anic and prophetic principles pertaining to the perception of the time frame that leads to the Final Day.

As difficult as this may be for thinking Muslims to accept, there are statements in Islamic religious literature to the effect that the world is around 7,000 years old. This is obviously a spillover of *isrā'īliyyāt* into Islamic historical sources, which are still awaiting a much-needed decontamination process. When Islam moved out of the Arabian Peninsula it absorbed many cultures and information systems; and in the process some of this false information got lodged into Islamic reference books, especially by Jews who “became” Muslims. Unfortunately, up until this very day, there has not been enough of a systemic motivation and scholarly intrepidity to weed out these *isrā'īliyyāt*.<sup>645</sup>

Abū Ja'far ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī in his writings attributes a statement to Ibn 'Abbās in which the latter says, “The world is equivalent to a *jumu'ah* [sixth day of the week] or a week of the *ākhirah* — the stretch of 7,000 years of which 6,100 years have lapsed.”<sup>646</sup> Al-Ṭabarī also records this time span of 7,000 years from a narrative attributed to Ka'b al-Aḥbār; and there is a similar attribution to Wahb ibn Munabbih.<sup>647</sup> There are also statements attributed to Ibn 'Umar saying that the time remaining of this world before it comes to an end is analogous to the time that separates *Ṣalāh al-'Asr* from *Ṣalāh al-Maghrib*.<sup>648</sup> So if the overall time frame of a day was placed in the time span between *al-'Asr* and *al-Maghrib*, this would result in about one-fifth, meaning that at the time of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) four-fifths of the world's age had elapsed and one-fifth was left. But the question remains as to what is represented by the four-fifths? Is it the 6,000–7,000-year length of time? Or is it something else?

Digging up never-ending arguments about the exact onset of the Final Day is fruitless, to say the least. But it is nonetheless important to refute the most mind-boggling of these arguments, the more so when there are Muslim speakers and Muslim listeners who have fallen prey to these *isrā'īliyyāt* and routinely (and mindlessly) parrot them. It is preposterous and silly to accept assertions in some

Islamic reference books that say the Prophet (ﷺ) will be in his grave for only a thousand years. And accordingly some ‘ulamā’ have issued opinionated statements to the effect that the Mahdī, the Antichrist, and the descending of ‘Īsá (ﷺ) will take place in the 10th century of Islam.

The famous Egyptian Islamic historian and theologian, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, gave the Islamic Ummah not more than 1,500 years after the Prophet’s death. This narrative of speculations and suppositions gives humanity 120 years of survival after the Sun rises from the west. Further reading indicates that ‘Īsá (ﷺ) will live for 40 years after the defeat and extermination of the Antichrist. After that, as this end of times scenario has it, a man from the Arabian tribe of Tamīm will take the reigns of power and rule for three years. Thereafter, by God’s decree, there will be a wind that will cause the demise of all committed Muslims, after which mankind will live for 100 years in a social order that has no *dīn*. These chronologists forecast (or calculate) that between the two wailing sounds (*al-naḥkhatayn*) there will be a period of 40 years. All this and similar attempts at quantifying future events in a specific time frame have turned out to be false, not in accordance with reality, and untrustworthy.

All this “Islamic” cave-in to Yahūdī claims is nothing new. Just look around today and note how establishmentarian Muslim scholars trail gratuitously behind this Yahūdī impression of the end of times. The character of these same Yahūd is recorded for all eternity in the Qur’an, if such scholars would pay closer attention, **“The Fire will not touch us except for a few days” (3:24).**

Reflecting on the meanings of this Book of certainty, one observes today a profusion of talk within the Judeo-Christian world about the end times and the Last Day. Coterminous with this reality is the fact that there are no (or very few) Qur’anicly confident Islamic scholars who can look this issue in the eye and disprove the doomsday scenario that, for all practical purposes, identifies the Muslims, and maybe the Mahdī, as the Antichrist (*na’ūdhu bi-allāh*).

The oldest gospel, the Gospel of Mark, portrays a Jesus (ﷺ) who is obsessed by the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God. In order to usher in this new age he has to combat the forces of evil



that will attempt to thwart it. A stark dualism infuses such a world-view. As recorded by St. Mark, Jesus had an overpowering sense of cosmic war. St. Mark stresses deeds, strength, and the determination of Jesus in battling the forces of evil. He and his followers were convinced there were supernatural forces abroad in the world pitted against the forces of goodness. It would be only in the Last Days that these forces would be overthrown and defeated.<sup>649</sup>

The Gospel of Mark is suffused with the sense of the imminence of total transformation. Despite all the healing, preaching, and exorcism the Kingdom of God will be ushered in only after a terrible period of tribulation. The so-called Marcan Apocalypse predicts that when the end comes not one stone of the Temple shall be left standing. Preceding this are the Last Days, a period surging with false pretenders to the title of Christ, “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect” (Mark, 13:22). Nation will be pitted against nation; religious persecutions, famines, and earthquakes will wrack the world; and cosmological disturbances will be the final sign that the end is about to occur,

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: so ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors (Mark, 13:24–29).<sup>650</sup>

The radical and insurrectionary nature of much millenarianism was an important factor in its spread. Such a belief empowers the

lowly, endowing them with a spiritual glory over and above their earthly masters. For Montanus (second century CE), the world was one vast theater in which the drama of the Lasts Days was being acted out. In the lead role was the Holy Ghost, pouring out prophecies and visions to believers, which challenged the ecclesiastical authority of the day — the Catholic Church. Who needed a bishop or intercessory priests when one could be visited directly by the Holy Ghost? Frantic and frenzied outpourings of religious energy were also just as likely to attract as to repel. For the early church fathers, Montanism was the writing on the wall: it warned them about the dangers posed by apocalyptic expectations. And so, as early as the second Gregorian century, the age-old clash between institutionalized religion and the self-proclaimed apocalyptic agents of God had already erupted.<sup>651</sup>

The Abbot of Cluny established a center at his monastery for the translation and refutation of Muslim writings. This critical work was soon perverted into gross distortions of the life of Muhammad (ﷺ). Accordingly, “Mahomet” is portrayed as a false prophet, a sensualist, a warmonger, and a drunk; this fabricated image became a stock character on the medieval stage in the mystery plays and romances, and was joined by the figure of the Saracen. The European distortion of the Prophet claimed that he is a god, patron or saint, or even a relative of various villains who pray to him or swear by him (*nastaghfir-allāh*).<sup>652</sup>

It is against this background of racist stereotyping and religious intolerance that the First Crusade should be seen. If it was a belief that the Jews and Muslims were agents of the Antichrist, then the logical conclusion was that they should be annihilated in order to usher in the Last Days and the Kingdom of the Saints. The perpetrators were wholly convinced they were good Christians, purifying the world of foul and demonic elements in order to make it fit for the New Jerusalem. This interplay between militarism and religious fanaticism is aptly illustrated by what happened when the Crusaders arrived eventually at the fortified walls of the earthly Jerusalem. On June 7, 1099, they got down on their knees in an act of collective worship. After crossing continents, losing thousands on their way,

and suffering appalling deprivations, “Christ’s soldiers” were convinced that their safe arrival must have been divinely ordained. Now it was payback day: they were attacking and destroying a people they associated with the demonic host.<sup>653</sup>

The troublemakers asking their troubled questions would one day turn on their own selves. For one thing, Martin Luther’s key doctrine of justification by faith alone had little appeal to Müntzer. In his apocalyptic scenario, what mattered was predicting when the world would end, an event that was imminent and feverishly anticipated. Luther too believed he was living amidst the Last Days but believed that it was impossible to predict when the end would come. That it would come and that the believers ought to prepare for it spiritually was what mattered. To do this, the true word of God had to be spread through the channels of the world. For Luther, the great obstacle to this was the false religion masquerading as Christianity. In his apocalyptic scenario, therefore, the pope himself, God’s representative on earth, was the Antichrist, and the Whore of Babylon was the Catholic Church and all its misbelievers. In contrast, Müntzer preached a bloody and militant apocalyptic faith that had wide-ranging social and political implications rather than just simply religious and theological ones. Not since the time of the Taborites had such revolutionary and radical beliefs been expounded.<sup>654</sup>

In 17th-century England, rebellion against a centralized religious authority often took on a similarly apocalyptic form as it did with the 16th-century Müntzer. During the tumultuous years of the English Civil War (1642–1651) and the Commonwealth (1649–1660), congeries (aggregates) of apocalyptic sects and groups sprung up. One of the most famous was the Fifth Monarchy Men. They took their name from the prophetic dream of Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel in which a fifth monarchy would succeed the Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman monarchies/empires,

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall

break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (Daniel, 2:44).

In their eschatology, Fifth Monarchists viewed this period as the millennial reign of Christ on earth, and in very literal and physical terms, just like Christians had done prior to St. Augustine. The turbulent events of contemporary history were read therefore as part of a divine signifying system. The execution of Charles I in 1649 was seen as ushering in the Last Days; the final apocalyptic battle and the destruction of the Antichrist were to take place between 1655 and 1657. Then there would be the thousand-year reign of the Saints (that is, themselves) on earth. Contemporary political figures were recast in topological terms. When Oliver Cromwell dissolved the Rump Parliament in April 1653, Fifth Monarchists hailed him as a second Moses leading God's chosen people to the Promised Land. The Nominated Assembly of 1653 represented the high-water mark of Fifth Monarchist influence; many of the delegates were from Fifth Monarchy congregations.<sup>655</sup>

This end-times fixation and complex was put to rest by the authority of Allah (ﷻ) in this everlasting Book. The great Islamic sociologist, Ibn Khaldūn, in his *Muqaddimah*, while speaking about the rise and fall of nations, alluded to this mentality of millenarianism, saying there is an impression among some that traces back to the Ṣaḥābah, especially those Muslims who were preexistent Israelis, such as Ka'b al-Aḥbār, Wahb ibn Munabbih, and their likes. Among those who rejected all this nonsense about a 6,000- or 7,000-year-old world were Ibn Ḥazm, al-Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ, and Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī.<sup>656</sup>

With regard to this disturbed body of information concerning the belief held by some Christians and Jews about the second coming or first coming of Christ, or that there will be a thousand-year reign of the saints, either before or immediately after the return of Jesus (ﷺ), the Muslims should be confident of their more disciplined understanding of this subject. The Christian belief is generally based on an interpretation of verses from the Book of Revelation,

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison... (Revelation, 20:1–7).

The main body of Christians has not endorsed this millenarianism, but it had its advocates from the earliest years of church-sponsored Christianity. In the 19th century there was a renewal of apocalyptic and millennial ideas, such as the Plymouth Brethren and the Adventists. In recent decades, the term *millenarianism* has been used more broadly by social scientists, referring to any religious group looking forward to a sudden and early transformation of the world. Such movements tend to arise in periods of great social change or during social crises, and usually aim to advance a suppressed social group.

Before shedding Islamic light on the preconditions that lead up to the Last Hour, consider briefly the Jewish frame of mind on this matter as it exists today. This information is not provided here

to further confuse the issue or to add another piece of inaccurate information to this already muddy subject, but to identify the purveyors of such views in the public space.

The doctrine of the end of days in the current Jewish mind refers to the fundamental transformation of the present world by divine plan at a period determined by God. The end-of-days world is not necessarily one that has never previously existed; the view is sometimes advanced that on the last day the world, which was entirely right and fine at creation and only corrupted by human deviations and transgressions, will be restored to its pristine condition. Such views were common in the ancient Orient and are also found in Greek literature.<sup>657</sup>

Jewish end-of-time opinions are hard to classify in an orderly system according to logical laws of development. Varied and sometimes contradictory outlooks were held successively or even simultaneously. A general line, however, is discernible in the Jewish end-of-times concept from its very beginnings, as recorded in the early sections of the Bible. Originally, end-of-time theory was an expression of popular faith in the glorious future anticipated for the nation after a period of suffering. In its full development, it possessed a religious and moral content, and was introduced by the great Hebrew prophets into their teachings, albeit with their own moral coloring, which transformed naive folk beliefs. The popular conception of the end-of-times era was a period when the renewed people of Israel would wreak vengeance on their foes and set up a great, powerful kingdom; this victorious period was called "the Day of the Lord."<sup>658</sup>

The prophets, however, added moral content and threatened catastrophe in the absence of genuine repentance; thus, the Day of the Lord became a day of doom. This transition is patently clear in the Book of Amos and recurs in various forms and degrees in the writings of the other great prophets. But disaster was not the only element in the prophetic end-of-times conception; the final day was also envisioned as the great day when God would reform the world and reign over all peoples in justice. A new heaven and earth will be created, while God will renew His covenant with Israel and

establish His throne in Zion. This trend is particularly apparent in the latter chapters of the Book of Isaiah.<sup>659</sup>

However, no distinction between the present world and the world to come is recognized in the prophetic end-of-times theology, which recognizes only this world. The resuscitation of the Jewish people and the land of Israel, and the appearance of the king-messiah are described as events that will occur in the real world. But as reality became ever more remote from the expected glory, so the accounts of the Day of the Lord became more glowing, exaggerated, and imaginative. The end of time was thus transformed into apocalyptic beliefs as can be seen in the Book of Ezekiel and the visions of Zechariah.<sup>660</sup>

A new element is thought by many scholars to have been introduced into Jewish end-of-times theology by the Book of Daniel, which is dated to the Maccabean Period (first and second century BCE). The persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes depressed the nation's religious groups, and the messianic kingdom, receding from this world, took on the aspect of a kingdom beyond human reality. The change is symbolized by the figure of the "son of man" who descends from the heavens and proclaims the proximity of the Kingdom of God. At the threshold of the new epoch stand the resurrection of the dead and Judgement Day when evil will be outlawed and the wise will receive their due reward. The Apocrypha (including pseudepigraphic literature) and Aggadah provide an unfailing source of information on end-of-times outlooks during and after Second Temple times, reflecting all shades of religious opinion.<sup>661</sup>

The development of the apocalyptic aspect of the end-of-times beliefs, foreshadowed under Antiochus Epiphanes, eventually encompassed the nation as a whole, in addition to its individuals, and this proved of particular importance in the early stages of Christianity. The end-of-times thinker comprehends the entire world, knowing the period of its duration and the events of its latter days. The "end" will be an era of suffering and catastrophes under the rule of the Antichrist. The apocalyptic sources, from the Book of Daniel onward, regard the "end" as a sign of the advent of the Messiah. They speak of "the agonies of the Messiah," a terrible last

war — the war of Gog and Magog — ranging over Jerusalem. According to one view, the Messiah son of Joseph, the forerunner of the Messiah son of David, will fall in this war. But the forces of evil will be defeated, whereupon Elijah will appear and announce the advent of the Messiah and this will be the signal for the ingathering of the Diaspora and the freedom of Israel from subjection to gentile kingdoms. A new Jerusalem will arise, and Israel's glory will be manifest to the world. The duration of the messianic kingdom will, however, be restricted; it will be succeeded by the Kingdom of God and Judgement Day when the just and wise (generally meaning Israel) will receive their reward, and the wicked (generally the gentiles who have oppressed Israel) will descend to Gehinnom “to everlasting abhorrence.”<sup>662</sup>

Nowadays, as the nuts and bolts of justice become tighter and tighter around the apartheid Israeli nation-state, the notion of millenarianism, the apocalypse, and Armageddon are once again making a strong comeback. So, with this backdrop, consider now the Islamic view of this whole issue, about which the Prophet (ﷺ) was questioned,

**They will ask you [O Prophet] about the Last Hour [Day], “When will it come to pass?” Say, “Verily, knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer alone. None but He will reveal it in its time. Heavily will it weigh on the heavens and the earth; [and] it will not fall upon you other than unexpectedly (7:187).**

This *āyah* presents an unequivocal and authoritative answer to those who live a life anticipating or forecasting the occurrence of the Last Day. The Muslims know that they do not have certain, up-to-the-minute knowledge of it. And thus, any claims from them that the world is 6,000 or 7,000 years old, especially with no *āyah* or hadith as substantiation, are erroneous. What can be said with certainty is that the time-length of human life on earth is known only to Allah (ﷻ), “**I have not made them privy to the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor to the creation of their own**



selves” (18:51). Moreover, the Prophet said, “You [the Muslims] in respect to other peoples before you are not but a white hair in a black ox, or a black hair in a white ox.”<sup>663</sup> This means that the cumulative histories of different peoples, past and present, are nothing more than a speck in the terrain of time. He also said, “I was commissioned vis-à-vis the Final Hour as these two [fingers — and he gestured with his index and middle finger].”<sup>664</sup> These words suggest that there is a contiguous but short time period between the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Final Day. Even so, what is “short” in the course of the heavens and earth that in some scientific estimates are in the billions of years old?

As mentioned earlier, the Final Hour will be foreshadowed by indicators and signals,

**Are, then, they [whose hearts are sealed] waiting for the Last Hour — [waiting] that it come upon them of a sudden? But it has already been foretold! And what will their remembrance [of their past sins] avail them, once it has come upon them? (47:18)**

The Final Hour has its *ashrāt*, the signs and intimations that foretell of the Day not being far away, but its exact onset is known only to Allah (ﷻ). The most significant sign of the pending Last Hour is the advent of Rasūl-Allāh (ﷺ). His arrival brought the historical mission of prophethood to its cumulative end, “**Today I have perfected for you your *dīn*, and completed my favor upon you and am pleased to have Islam as your *dīn*” (5:3).**

Other signs of the Last Hour include the struggle between materialistic or carnal desires and the yearning for divine guidance. This tussle will go back and forth until finally the carnal and sensual desires win out. This would mean that the world will be inundated with an air of debauchery and evil, a clash with scripture, and denial of Allah’s authority and divinity. The human beings responsible for this state of affairs will be considered the most offensive and immoral in human history. When the Final Hour comes it will surround and smother this wayward human condition.

In this regard, there is a hadith that describes the Prophet's encounter with the angel Gabriel (ﷺ) who came to the former in the manifestation of a mortal man. Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) was in the presence of his companions who were watching, listening, and learning — but not knowing that the visitor was Gabriel. Near the end of their extended exchange, the conversation went as follows according to a narration from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who was one of the companions present,

He [the unknown man — Gabriel] pressed on, “So, tell me about the Final Hour.” He [Muhammad] answered, “*The questioner does not know more than the questioned.*” He [the unidentified man] ended with, “So tell me about its signs.” He [the Prophet] said, “*When a bondwoman gives birth to her overlord, and when you see those who are barefooted, scantily clad, indigent, and shepherders competing with each other to build skyscrapers.*”<sup>665</sup>

This hadith has been strikingly authenticated by the yokels of Arabia — born as lowbrows, and now coroneted as royalty. These ragtag Bedouins are in the middle of a construction boom that is polluting the skyline of Arabia with high-rises and tall buildings; and the sanctity of the holy precincts is being incrementally mothballed as these concrete commercial monstrosities are being built atop intentionally demolished Islamic heritage sites. Several news stories have directed attention to the fact that one-fourth of all construction cranes in the world are located on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf.<sup>666</sup> In another hadith, the Prophet is reported to have said,

*The Final Hour will not commence until two great camps duel it out with each other in a substantive way — both sharing the same calling; it will not commence until there are around thirty imposters — each claiming to be Allah's Messenger; until knowledge is withdrawn; until there are numerous earthquakes; until time is compacted; until seditious acts surface and acts of murder and genocide appear; until money is*

*so abundant that a financier will not find a person to give charitable money to; until people compete as to who will have the tallest building; until a person passes by the grave of another and says, "I wish I was in his place"; and until the Sun rises from its sunset — and when that happens all people will adhere in faith to Allah, but at that time, "...a soul will not benefit from its faith if that faith was not there before — faithfully generating commitment and richness..." (6:158).<sup>667</sup>*

### Confidence in the “System” Incites Detachment from God

Utilizing the literary device of juxtaposition, this next round of *āyāt* illustrates how the human psychology approaches Allah (ﷻ) when it needs him but ignores Him when it feels it does not. In addressing this peculiarity of man’s psyche with a view to directing it toward its own edification, Allah teaches the Prophet (ﷺ), and by extension the committed Muslims, about the vacuous claims and fallow arguments of those who try to invoke authority over others,

**It is He who has created you [all] out of one living entity, and out of it brought into being its mate, so that the mate might incline [with love] toward it [mate’s counterpart]. And so, when he has inundated her, she conceives [what at first is] a light burden, and continues to bear it. Then, when she grows heavy [with a child-fetus] they both call unto Allah, their Sustainer, “If You indeed grant us a sound [newborn], we shall most certainly be among the grateful!” And yet, as soon as He has granted them sound [offspring], they begin to ascribe to other powers beside Him a share in bringing about what He has granted them! Sublimely exalted, however, is Allah — above anything to which men may ascribe a share in His divinity/authority.**

**Will they, then, ascribe divinity/authority, side by side with Him, to beings that cannot create anything**

— since they themselves are created — and [that] neither are able to give them support nor can they support themselves, and, [that] if you pray to them [the idols] for guidance, do not respond to you? As far as you are concerned, it is all the same whether you invoke them or keep silent. Verily, all those whom you invoke beside Allah are but created beings like yourselves: invoke them, then, and let them answer your prayer — if what you claim is true!

Have these [images], perchance, feet on which they could walk? Or have they hands with which they could grasp? Or have they eyes with which they could see? Or have they ears with which they could hear? Say [O Prophet], “Summon to your aid all those to whom you ascribe a share in Allah’s authority/divinity, and thereupon contrive [anything you may wish] against me, and give me no respite! Verily, my preferred protector is Allah, who has bestowed this divine Writ from on high: for it is He who protects the righteous, whereas all those whom you invoke in His stead are neither able to give you support nor can they support themselves; and if you pray to them [the idols] for guidance, they do not hear; and though you may imagine that they behold you, they do not see” (7:189–198).

This *sūrah* began with an emphasis on the sole authority and divinity of Allah (ﷻ) and now it is ending with a reemphasis on the same. Here, there is a reminder of the genesis of life so that man’s mind can concentrate on an issue that he would otherwise bury under the commonplace, routine, and habitual occurrences in life. If man could only circulate the fact of Allah’s creative power in his public mind the intrusion of *shirk* would be that much harder.

Here, Allah (ﷻ) is informing man that He created human beings from one *nafs* (bio-being). And from it he created its counterpart — its soulmate.<sup>668</sup> Out of this twosome emerged the

countless humans who live and have lived on earth. To reinforce these points, He says in other *āyāt*,

**O People! Be wary of your Sustainer [His power presence] who has created you all from one bio-essence and from it created its consort and from both of them He scattered many men and women (4:1);**

**O People! We have created you from a male and a female and rendered you into ethnic derivatives and social co-relatives so that you may mutually become familiar with each other (49:13).**

Many would understand this to mean that Allah (ﷻ) created mankind from one human race and one human nature having a corresponding mate of the same race and nature but of the opposite sex so that there would be a placidity and tranquility in their co-relationship. The creation of other species also comes from a twosome of sexes, **“And from everything We created twosomes [male and female], so that you may be cognizant [that Allah is the only creator]” (51:49).**

This inclination with love toward the complementary sex means that the natural and normal relationship between man and woman should be one of tenderness and repose. Corroborating this meaning He also says,

**And of His [power/authority] manifestations is that He has created for you out of your own selves mates so that you may repose and settle down with each other, and He has rendered between you a fondness and grace... (30:21).**

This yearning for each other is an elemental aspect of the nature of both man and woman. During the raging hormones period of life, when teenagers are bursting with vitality, their is no other meaningful outlet for their mutual passion except for their being coupled

with one another. There is no familiarity, closeness, and liaison as intimate as a husband-wife relationship. The continuation of life depends on this deeply personal and private love.

Then Allah (ﷻ) moves on to the overwhelming moment in this male-female relationship. When He says, **“And so, when he has drenched her...,”** this refers to the conjugal moment(s) in their relationship. From here, fertilization begins and a gestation commences. An embryo is conceived, typically derived from a sexually fertilized ovum, contained inside the maternal body. The embryonic phase commences with the division of the fertilized egg (zygote), and ends with the birth of a young baby. An embryo, after a few months of pregnancy, develops into what are the main recognizable features of the newborn. This embryonic stage, which lasts from eight weeks after conception to birth, is known in Islamic fiqh as *al-ḥaml al-khafif* (light pregnancy) during which a pregnant mother feels no pain or burden. Gradually after the initial conception the woman’s menstrual period ceases but she carries on as she normally would — and this is the meaning of **“...and she continued to bear it [the embryo].”**

As time passes, the pregnant wife and mother-to-be begins to feel the burden as the embryo turns into a fetus and the delivery time approaches. At this point, both husband and wife, who want only to have a healthy, vibrant, and lovable baby, beseech Allah (ﷻ), their Sustainer, **“If You indeed grant us a sound [child], we shall most certainly be among the thankful.”** And when they receive what they asked for — a baby full of health and adorable in every way — these parents turn away from Allah’s authority. In other words, at the critical time of creation God is everything, but thereafter, He is barely an afterthought, no longer their source of security, **“And yet, as soon as He has granted them good and fit [offspring], they begin to impute to other powers beside Him a share in bringing about what He has granted them!”**

Notice how both husband and wife participate on an equal par with each other in their love, in their emotions for their unborn, in their fear of the future, and in their prayer to Allah (ﷻ). The Qur’an could not be clearer in laying all this out; there is no hint

of any kind of male-female discrimination or patronizing.<sup>669</sup> Allah's authority gets eroded in this instance when the parents feel they are out of the "danger zone." This is the opportune moment for the governments and mass media of the world to move in and fill their senses with "objective" information that is disseminated for the purpose of relocating Allah's authority onto compassionate conservatives, bleeding heart liberals, the social security system, the total healthcare plan, or the like. As much as these people and programs may be helpful, they can never replace Allah as authority and power in the lives of parents, in the lives of families, and in the world at large, **"Sublimely exalted, however, is Allah above anything to which men may ascribe a share in His divinity/authority."**

What is evident from the practical implications of this object lesson is that there are parents who are fearful of the consequences of pregnancy; they want all their babies to be delivered safely with no complications for the mother during her childbearing years. Standing alone in this drama, having no one to turn to for substantial help, they turn to Allah (ﷻ) and He responds with His care and compassion as they are treated to healthy and happy babies. Then, in the course of time, governments and institutions develop their theories and implement their policies. During this delicate moment in the life of parents, they are led to believe that government-sponsored or state-regulated healthcare can offer them guarantees of babies free from infirmity and disease. They go on to sign up for prenatal, postnatal, and wellness programs, all the while the care of Allah, which was so important to them earlier, recedes and slips from their minds altogether. This mental and emotional dislocation of who Allah is in the minds of people is a very serious demotion of His divinity and authority. What is being said here should not be misread as an argument against health programs, health departments, healthcare, and health insurance. On the contrary, these things are necessary and should be part of man's rights in life. But the way such programs are implemented in secular and materialistic cultures, where governments and their institutions routinely take the place of God, they dominate in the lives of ordinary people at the expense of Allah's overall care when

the latter find themselves in times of duress or are vulnerable to the “unknown.”

Many people today have substituted the idols of ancient paganism with idols that have no physical structure. These idols are the strategies and policies, the ideologies and political systems that, in one way or the other, claim to offer man security and well-being — what should be attributed to Allah (ﷻ) in mind and in manner. If, as the official line has it, a child is born and cared for by the state, then the family is indebted to this state for the well-being and aid that the state or government offered the child from the time he was a fetus to the time he became an adolescent. And now, when he reaches the age of 20 or so, and the state wants this child to go fight in a war for the “homeland,” there will not be much of an objection from those who are, after all, indebted (parents and children) — regardless of whether or not the war is just. Parents and people in general no longer have the psychological independence that comes from belonging to Allah to endorse or object on the basis of right or wrong, good or evil, moral or immoral — in accordance with Allah’s authority and power. This is the *shirk* that has burrowed itself into the social fabric of society and enslaved the parents who would otherwise resist and object to the authority of such states. What is the difference between primitive peoples who would offer their children to gods of stone and wood, and the modern peoples who offer their children to “civilized” authorities composed of elites and powermongers?

The human populations in the world today are infused with the common notion of defining God as a deity — a lord of sorts. But when it comes to the social instructions, the ideological component of His scripture, and the lifelong struggle of His Prophets (ﷺ) this mass of “sheeple” dismisses God and objects to Him having any authority whatsoever. Concurrently, the same “sheeple” will not countenance a degradation of their own governments by de-authorizing them or dethroning them from their seats of power when they so condescendingly steal God’s authority. In this lesson Allah (ﷻ) wants to sensitize man to the fact that He gives life — life in the womb, life at birth, and life into the everlasting



existence. Thus, He and He alone is man's authority, not those human beings who present themselves as the highest authorities in the land.

It would appear that the ancient paganism of Arabia had more substance than today's secularism. At least, when they offered their sacrifices to the idols, they did so acknowledging the superiority of Allah (ﷻ); their sacrifices were meant as a means to approach Allah and draw nearer to Him. In today's world of *shirk*, however, God does not even appear on the radar of people, He is not remembered except maybe in the cemetery or the morgue — and then only for a few fleeting moments. Anyone who believes there has been some qualitative improvement from the *mushriks* of ancient times to the *mushriks* of modern times is fooling himself. *Mushriks* are *mushriks*, regardless of the era they hail from. And if there is any difference, it lies in the fact that modern *mushriks* are more sophisticated and less visible about how they wield the power and confiscate the authority with which they enslave populations for their service and obedience.

The incompatibility of Allah's authority with that of man can be easily demonstrated by the fact that Allah's laws are moral, whereas man's are amoral. Allah (ﷻ) instructs and teaches man to be honest, modest, chaste, and forthright. But the "national interest," the economy, and the production lines do not care about these virtues. To the contrary, the "national productive economy" may force women into compromising jobs, insecure circumstances, and submissive gratuities with her bosses. When women have to socially "accommodate" their male co-workers, are they not being subjected to the exploitative authority of man? Is it not in the nature of a society lacking Allah's authority for its women to yield to the male hierarchy as a means for job promotion? Who said that women should disarm their charm by exposing their chests, arms, legs, and even more than that? Where did all this come from, and for what purpose? Visualize a hotel and the women who are either employed there on a permanent basis or are transient "in and out" call girls; are such "professions," which are considered "legal" under man's authority, consistent with God's authority? This observation

among the hundreds of other observations speaks volumes about man's oppressive authority. A woman in these unassertive and subordinate positions — who is her authority? Is it God or is it man?

Racism and nationalism are simply idols of another form. Ideologies are contrived out of the concept of a “chosen race” or a superior nationality. They push God into oblivion and the “supremo,” the “maximalist,” or the “strongman” become the authorities of the people and land, hence the neo-gods of our generation. Allah (ﷻ) says that He is the Lawgiver but He is contradicted by some “national hero” or “military leaders” who say that the people are the source of the law. This is what has led to a world riddled with *shirk*. Modern-day *shirk* is well-informed, subtle but “secure,” and prevalent but camouflaged.

Had it not been for this authoritative Book, the sponsors of worldwide injustice could have gotten away with their subliminal indoctrination and their heavy-handed policies. This sublime Scripture tries to pull people out of this pool of *shirk*,

**Do they, then, ascribe divinity/authority, side by side,  
with Him, to beings that cannot create anything —  
since they themselves are created — and neither are  
able to give them support nor can support themselves?  
(7:191–192).**

This point is made over and over again: He who creates is the one who dominates, He who creates is the one who qualifies to be man's authority. Other idols and gods, be they material or otherwise, cannot create anything, rather they are created. If this fact is grasped by man in the way it should be, then there can be no *shirk* coming from parents and no *shirk* emerging from subsequent generations. Human authorities are false. They have no power and they have no control.

If this whole issue was left up to the unencumbered human mind there would be no objection to this fact. The problem is that lusts and interests, deception and brainwashing move people in a social direction at odds with their common sense. Humanity today

needs the clear understanding of what Allah (ﷻ) has to say. When humanity listened 14 centuries ago there was a qualitative improvement and a civilizational leap unprecedented in human history. If humanity would only listen again to what Allah is saying about Islam — not to what the enemies of Islam are saying and not to the Judeo-Christian *isrā'iliyāt* as well as secular terminology — a new era will dawn on the readers of this Qur'an, **“Do they ascribe authority/divinity to people who cannot create but are rather created? And they cannot give them support and even support themselves?”**

The next few *āyāt*, directed to the human faculty of thinking, try to stimulate some common sense in the instinctive Arabians aforetime and in the visceral materialists today. The idols of old were artless stones and basically ridiculous objects. Having no feet to walk on, no hands to work with, no eyes to see with, and no ears to hear with, these idols inexplicably attracted the reverence of their hosts, who, by the way, were blessed with all their senses and associated appurtenances,

**And, if you pray to them [the idols] for guidance, they do not respond to you! As far as you are concerned, it is all one whether you invoke them or keep silent. Verily, all those whom you invoke besides Allah are but created beings like yourselves: invoke them, then, and let them answer your prayer — if what you claim is true! Have these [images], perchance, feet on which they could walk? Or have they hands with which they could grasp? Or have they eyes with which they could see? Or have they ears with which they could hear? (7:193–195).**

And if there are other deities such as angels or ancestors that are revered, then they, too, are dependent beings just like those who hold them in high esteem; that is, they cannot create anything and their hosts cannot create anything. Accomplishment and achievement in the realm of creation do not come from sub-divinities.

This is all the more true of present-day idolatry. Yes, it is obvious that the idols of yore themselves had no senses or appendages to utilize, but what is less apparent or being lost between the lines is the fact that these idols *saw*, *heard*, *walked*, and *grasped* through the eyes, ears, feet, and hands of their human agents. Whatever was attributed to these idols was made real in the public space and the social milieu by human faculties. Furthermore, all of the mystery surrounding the idols and any supposed agency or power they had to influence human activity was all invented and pioneered by prior human beings — ancestors, patriarchs, tribal bosses, “wise” men, etc. And so it is with human philosophies-cum-ideologies: in order for them to become social policies, public priorities, political programs, or military incursions, they require a human instrument or agency, what has been characterized here as an *ummaḥ*.

For an ideology to command authority over its *ummaḥ* (human adherents or agents working together to achieve an objective) in the form of resocialized human behavior, it must demand absolute conformity (*‘ibādaḥ*) to a foundational set of ideas, suppositions, or delineations of a divinely sanctioned exceptionalism. Allah (ﷻ) also demands conformity, only He demands conformity to the truth — which is both just and beneficial for man — whereas ideologies demand conformity to the views and attitudes of certain human beings. Hence, if these humans are racists, then their ideology demands *‘ibādaḥ* to the suppositions that infer the superiority of one people over all others; if they are nationalists, they demand *‘ibādaḥ* to whatever they perceive to be the national interest at the given moment, even if it is narrow, exploitative, unjust, and oppressive, which it usually is; if they are capitalists, they demand *‘ibādaḥ* to a class structure that continually transfers wealth from the poor to the rich; if they are communists, then they demand *‘ibādaḥ* to perpetual and reactionary class warfare that is meant to protect society from the endemic class subservience of capitalism; if they are feminists, they demand *‘ibādaḥ* to the notion that not only is the feminine identity unique, and thereby lesbianism as a consummation of that uniqueness, but necessarily independent of the masculine; if they are materialists, they demand *‘ibādaḥ* to the idea that there is

no knowledge beyond or outside of what man can ascertain with his senses; if they are Zionists, they demand conformity to the subjugation and derogation of all races to the “chosen people,” the “elect,” the “elite”; and this can go on and on.

It is this dislocation of conformity from Allah (ﷻ) as authority to any other source, be it idolatry or ideology (all human inventions and thus two sides of the same coin), that at its very core is *shirk*. All human ideologies, even if conceived of by the “best of intentions,” are dead ends and blind alleys: their transformational potential is limited to whatever can be temporarily achieved by force, and not by voluntary action through conviction. This requires little proof for those who are looking at their world with open eyes as democratization is carried to your friendly neighborhood Third-World country in the payload of a missile, in the “responsibility to protect” prosecuted by terrorists-cum-rebels, and in continued colonialism justified by false flags. Thus, subsuming mass human behavior — that is, human eyes, human ears, human hands, human legs — to ideologies, just like the idols of the past, is a greater crime and treachery to the Creator and Sustainer than to intellectually conceive an ideological orientation to begin with — an unforgivable crime. Yesterday’s idolatry, dressed up and “avant-garded,” is today’s ideology.

In other words, Allah (ﷻ) does not have to overstate the self-evident by telling us that idols (and ideologies) do not possess the faculties of human beings; we already know that. Doing so would be an insult to the intelligence He graciously endowed us with. Rather, His metaphor is alluding to the persistent reality that these eyes, ears, hands, and feet are the very institutions, departments, agencies, ministries, think tanks, focus groups, intelligence apparatus, corporations, and militaries of governments — the instruments of *shirk* — that transform ideological *kufir* into structural *zulm*.

The long and short of this lesson is that, mentally, it is unimaginable for a reasonable person to be governed by thoughtless idols, which neither have the capacity to harm nor provide benefit. On the scale of life, man’s level is far above what is merely physical or material, especially insofar as “worship” is concerned. A thinking

man can only conform to Allah (ﷻ), adore His divinity, and accept His authority. Nothing else will do. At the time this revelation came down, it was impossible for the *mushriks* to intimidate the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims with their crass idols, and so it should be with today's Muslims and the ideologies that are in vogue.

At the end of this lesson the Prophet (ﷺ) is instructed from on high to challenge these *mushriks* and their false deities, and then to state the true doctrine of this *dīn*,

**Say [O Prophet], “Summon to your aid all those to whom you ascribe a share in Allah’s divinity/authority, and thereupon contrive [anything you may wish] against me, and give me no respite! Verily, my patron is Allah who has revealed the Book and He champions the righteous. And those whom you [the *mushriks*] invoke besides Allah are not capable of supporting you, nor themselves can they support. And if you pray to them [the idols] for guidance, they will not hear and you will watch them looking at you having no ability to discern” (7:195–198).**

These words are expressed by a confident Prophet and assured Messenger. This was a standoff with the power structure of Arabia. And the Prophet was not so feeble as to resort to some diplomatic “give and take” with these *mushriks*. In today’s world of anything goes among the “Islamists,” those who are willing to face-off with the *mushriks* of today are for all practical purposes missing in action. What happened to the Sunnah of the Prophet? Is not an ideological confrontation with the false gods of the world and their hirelings a *sunnah* in the best meaning of the word?

The divine statement above stands on its own merits. But where are the Muslims of the Prophet (ﷺ) who will stand in his place? There are not very many of them, at least for the moment; but nonetheless the tide is beginning to turn and, in the near future, many committed Muslims will stand up for Allah (ﷻ) and

His Prophet. These figures who brandish their militaries and aggressively exhibit their financial empires have no more fortifications than a mosquito,

**O People! A parable is set forth [herewith]; hearken, then, to it! Behold, those beings whom you invoke instead of Allah cannot create [as much as] a fly, even were they to join all their forces to that end! And if a fly robs them of anything, they cannot [even] repossess it from it [the fly]! Weak indeed is the seeker, and [weak] the sought! (22:73);**

**The analogy of those who designate superiors other than Allah as their defenders is that of the spider, which makes for itself a house: for, behold, the frailest of all houses is the spider's house. Could they but understand this? (29:41).**

A committed Muslim knows he is always in the company of Allah (ﷻ); therefore all “authoritarian” figures, military forces, and temporal “superpowers” amount to nothing. Besides, even if they move into hostile positions, whatever will happen as a result of such infliction will progress in the way Allah wants it to. A committed Muslim can never lose. His mental attitude is that if he wins a battle he is militarily victorious; and if he loses a battle he is psychologically victorious.

Abū Bakr, virtually one of the closest people to the Prophet (ﷺ), was exposed to humiliation and physical abuse at the hands of the *mushriks* who, on one occasion, pelted his face with their shoes as they targeted his eyes and other senses. As he writhed in pain, he uttered (three times), “O Allah! How patient can You be from the position of power that You are in?” In his conscience, Abū Bakr knew how unflustered and unvindictive Allah (ﷻ) could be.<sup>670</sup>

When Ibn Mas'ūd recited the Qur'an to the *mushriks* who were in the vicinity of the Ka'bah, they also beat him leaving him staggering and barely able to walk. In recalling this humiliation

years later, he would repeat, “By Allah! They [the *mushriks*] appeared to me at that time as flimsy and insignificant as they could ever be.” He knew they were not up against him; rather they were facing off against Allah (ﷻ). He also realized that Allah would catch up with them sooner or later. This is the psychology the Prophet (ﷺ) instilled in the first group of committed Muslims.<sup>671</sup>

After losing his eye in a clash with the *mushriks*, ‘Abdullāh ibn Maz‘ūn could not tolerate being in the protection of the prime *mushrik* ‘Utbaḥ ibn Rabī‘aḥ knowing that there were Muslims who were being persecuted by these tormentors, so he left. But ‘Utbaḥ called him back to offer him protection, to which ‘Abdullāh responded “I am in the custody [safekeeping] of someone who is more potent than you.” ‘Utbaḥ exclaimed, “But you didn’t have to lose your eye!” And ‘Abdullāh finally said, “But by Allah, the other eye has all the wherewithal to march on to Allah.” This was a companion who knew that in the struggle for Allah (ﷻ), He is not going to forsake him — come what may, even blindness.<sup>672</sup>

These were the towering figures around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). They had the capacity to deploy the *āyāt* of the Qur’an to stand up for the Qur’an and the Prophet. Their behavior was captured by this *āyah*, “**Say, ‘Summon your co-gods and then contrive against me and do not hesitate. For sure my patron is Allah who has sent down this Book and He champions the doers of good.’**” What was the result of all the pain and agony, the humiliation and displacement they had to endure? Did their efforts pay off? Was Allah (ﷻ) in control of these developments? History answers these questions. The Muslims eventually triumphed. The adherents to Allah ultimately won the war. The men of Allah scored the victory that was their due. Their confidence in Allah did not go unnoticed by their Sustainer, “**Truly, my patron is Allah who has brought down the Book and He promotes the good-doers.**” And this is the way. There is no other way.

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) was ordered to challenge the *mushriks* — and he did. He was ordered to expose the nonsense of their false deities and artificial idols — and he did, “**And those you [the *mushriks*] call upon besides Allah cannot support you, and**



**cannot support themselves.”** This applies to all false authorities, past and present. Nationalism, racism, market production priorities, historical inevitabilities, and market forces — all these idols — will come crashing down. The false gods of superpower stature will crumble in God’s time with Godspeed, *inshā’allāh*. However, some Muslims want to see this happen from their ivory towers, others from the comfort of their royal connections, and still others are content to dream of this. None of this will work. It is going to take another wave of Abū Bakr, Ibn Mas‘ūd, and ‘Abdullāh ibn Maz‘ūn to engage with Allah (ﷻ) in the down-to-earth struggle of our times.

## Satan's Utility in Driving Man toward God

This lesson was provided to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) and the struggling Muslims when they were still in Makkah. Recall that the Prophet and the early Muslims were mentally taking on the Arabian culture and ideologically challenging the *mushrik* society, and by extension the whole superstructure of ignocracy (*jāhiliyah*) in the world. Within this confrontational atmosphere, the divine words below impressed upon the Prophet to show tolerance and demonstrate broad-mindedness to accommodate all that is, by human nature, acceptable and comforting. In this charged atmosphere the Prophet was not going around nitpicking for people's minor mistakes and personal moral failures. Rather, his concentration and that of his companions-in-struggle was directed at the infrastructure of ignocracy. Even as his opponents and enemies would try to "get on his nerves" and agitate him with their satanic suggestions and pressure he would be seeking Allah's protection and assurance. And then, he would be calm and forbearing,

- (7:199) Make due allowance for man's nature, and promote probity and brush aside all those who choose to remain ignorant.
- (7:200) And if it should happen that a prompting from Satan should stir you up [to blind anger], seek Allah's refuge, for certainly He is all-hearing, all-knowing.
- (7:201) Verily, those who are conscious [of Allah's power presence] become more aware [of His power front] whenever any insinuation of Satan is about to influence them — whereupon, lo! they begin to see [things] clearly.
- (7:202) Even though their [godless] affiliates would [like to] draw them into error: and then they cannot fail [to do what is right].
- (7:203) And yet, when you [O Prophet] do not produce any miracle for them, some [people] say, "Why do you not seek to obtain it [from Allah]?" Say, "I only follow whatever is being revealed to me by my Sustainer: this [revelation] is a

خذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ وَإِنَّمَا يَنْزَعَنَّكَ  
 مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ إِنَّا الَّذِينَ  
 اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَئِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ  
 ﴿٢٠١﴾ وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ وَإِذَا لَمْ  
 تَأْتِهِمْ بَيِّنَةٌ قَالُوا لَوْلَا اجْتَبَيْتَهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي  
 هَذَا بَصَائِرُ مِّنْ رَبِّي كُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَإِذَا  
 قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَأَذْكُرْ  
 رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرَّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ  
 وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا  
 يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَحْسِنُونَ وَلَهُ يُسْجَدُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

means of insight from your Sustainer, and a guidance and grace for people who commit themselves [to Allah].

- (7:204) “Hence, when the Qur’an is voiced, harken to it, and listen in silence, so that you might be graced with [Allah’s] mercy.”
- (7:205) And bethink yourself of your Sustainer humbly and with awe, and without raising your voice, at morn and at evening; and do not allow yourself to be heedless.
- (7:206) Behold, those who are near unto your Sustainer are never too proud to conform to Him; and they extol His limitless glory, and prostrate themselves before Him [alone].

The last few *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-A'raf* divulge some more information about the nature of nescient individuals and the internal thoughts that incline them toward iniquity and evil. The committed Muslims are fortunate to have these Qur'anic snapshots of the troublemaking characters who tried to frustrate the Prophet (ﷺ), and by extension those who are committed to his leadership, by asking for miracles. The Prophet, as always, was receiving divine direction while he was interfacing with these dark characters,

**Even though their [godless] kinsmen would [like to] draw them into error: and then they cannot fail [to do what is right]. And yet, when you [O Prophet] do not produce any miracle for them, some [people] say, “Why do you not seek to obtain it [from Allah]?” Say, “I only follow whatever is being revealed to me by my Sustainer: this [revelation] is a means of insight from your Sustainer, and a guidance and grace for people who commit themselves [to Allah]” (7:202–203).**

Following this is a reminder to the committed Muslims to carefully listen to the Qur'an as it is being vocalized. Vested in Allah's words is man's consciousness of Him. And this consciousness is a permanent feature of His adherents. No quarters are extended here to committed Muslims for being insensible, distracted, or pre-occupied when Allah (ﷻ) speaks. The angels, who do not disobey Allah, are in perpetual consciousness of Him — praising Him and prostrating themselves to Him. And therefore, this is all the more important for error-prone humans,

**Hence, when the Qur'an is voiced, listen to it, and try to hear [what is being recited], so that you might be graced with [Allah's] mercy. And bethink yourself of your Sustainer humbly and with awe, and without raising your voice, in the morning and in the evening; and do not allow yourself to be inattentive. Behold, those who are near to your Sustainer are never too**

**proud to comply with Him; and they extol His limitless glory, and prostrate themselves before Him [alone] (7:204–206).**

### **No Miracle Greater than the Qur'an**

Would that people read this Qur'an before they make blanket accusations against Islam. Here, there is a direct order from Allah (ﷻ) to all Muslims to behave in the best possible way with people of other faiths and creeds within a common human heritage of decency and probity,

**Make due allowance for man's state of nature, and promote integrity and avoid all those who choose to remain ignorant. And if it should happen that a suggestion from Satan should stir you up [to blind anger], search for Allah's refuge: behold, He is all-hearing, all-knowing. Verily, [as to] those who are actively conscious of Allah's power presence [in this world], if they are tapped by a trace of Satan, they rebound with an acute awareness [of Allah's power] — and thus do they gain insight [into their affairs] (7:199–201).**

Although the standards of the Qur'an are high, Muslims cannot expect non-Muslims to live with these high standards; and in the meantime Muslims are instructed to interact with non-Muslims within the perimeters of common sense and decency. If these non-Muslims fall into moral mistakes or immerse themselves into their own sins then the least a Muslim can do is to explain the truth in a principled manner and with a caring character.

However, important to note here is that the divine counsel of these *āyāt* applies strictly to day-to-day contact with individuals in society who are not Muslims. It has little to do with the Islamic responsibility of exposing the fallacy of society's exploitative system, the government's greed, and the military's aggression. These are two different subjects and must be dealt with appropriately. Feeling

for individuals who are victims of their own lusts and greed is one thing and feeling against establishments that are aggressors and warmongers is another thing. Never in his life did the honest Islamic Prophet (ﷺ) feel anger against others for himself.

**“And promote decency...”** There is a common ground of mutually accepted decency in human society. Courtesy, good manners, virtue, and respect are expressions of this common ground that all human beings agree to. Human nature is predisposed toward morality, manners, chastity, and honor. When some people part from these standards it will take an accommodating and tolerant “other” to bring them back to the right course. This may take time and it will definitely take patience and perseverance. But a bad temper, a nasty attitude, and an offensive character will never be able to spread the good word about ethical motives, character, nobility, and a sense of right and wrong. This general ambiance of feelings and ideas is acknowledged and honored by all human beings when they are in their God-given state of nature.

**“And put aside ignorant characters.”** The Qur’anic term *jāhili*n alludes to a type of congruency or fluidity between those who have no knowledge and those who have no maturity. Putting such people aside does not mean disrespect in this context, rather it points to sidestepping the friction and tension that are not productive in this encounter. Not much attention should be paid to hardcore immoral characters. Arguing with them will not miraculously transform them into applaudable and upstanding individuals. It may turn out that by being passive with them, they may search their own selves and then catch on to the truth and to a moral consciousness. An Islamic society that is observant of its public Islamic character endures these types of stray characters and wishes them well in the best possible way without becoming either tense or aggressive. This social interaction between open-minded, unvindictive committed Muslims and diehard *jāhils* (ignoramuses) is, in and of itself, a lesson to be observed by all decent people.

These divine words are speaking to the Prophet (ﷺ) who, after all, was a human being. As such, he was susceptible to the feelings of anger and outrage by individuals in society who knew how to

“get on his nerves.” And even if the Prophet himself was able to surmount such challenges, his followers, then and now, may not be able to do so. When people feel angry they offer a passageway for Satan into their “determination center.” This is why Allah (ﷻ) orders them to seek His sanctuary and anchorage. In doing so the anger is deflated and Satan is dispirited,

**And if it should happen that a prompting from Satan should stir you up [to blind anger], seek Allah’s haven: behold, He is all-hearing, all-knowing (7:200).**

This means that Allah knows all about ignorant, intimidating, and offensive characters who try to suffuse the men of God with the suggestions of Satan.

Even so, Satan has been given the capacity to tap into the behavior of committed Muslims. If Satan, to a certain extent, does manage to influence the feelings or the actions of a committed Muslim, then Allah (ﷻ) provides the remedy,

**In fact, [as to] those who are conscious of Allah’s power presence [here and now], if they are swayed by a trace of Satan, they rebound with elevated consciousness [of Allah] and thus do they gain perceptiveness (7:201).**

This means that Satan works to impair and mar the vision of Muslims who are conscious of Allah’s dominant power. However, the moving *āyah* indicates that although Satan wants to ensnare such a Muslim, in the end the power-conscious Muslim (*al-ladhīna ittaqaw*) will bounce back with astuteness and acumen that adds to his intuition and vision.

This *āyah* should act as an incentive to the hesitant and vacillating Muslims who dare not take a step forward, fearing that their efforts will be tainted by Satan. It is this fear of making a mistake that could possibly preclude a Muslim from doing Allah’s work, which ought to be a priority. Even if there are going to be mistakes along the way, unintentional as they may be, the work still has to

go ahead so that the higher consciousness of power-minded Muslims will evolve from this understanding of Allah (ﷻ).

Even though their [godless] fellows would [like to] draw them into error; and then they cannot fail [to do what is right]. And yet, when you [O Prophet] do not produce any miracle for them, some [people] say, “Why do you not seek to obtain it [from Allah]?” Say, “I only follow whatever is being revealed to me by my Sustainer: this [revelation] is a means of perceptivity from your Sustainer, and a guidance and grace for people who commit themselves [to Allah and His power] (7:202–204).

These fellows of theirs who draw them into error are either human or *jinnī* demons. The satanic string of influence and activities extends from the netherworld to human societies.

One aspect of this is the insistence of the *mushriks* that the Prophet produce miracles. In other words, they were asking Muhammad (ﷺ) to impress upon God to provide him with a miracle, and if He did not respond, then Muhammad should himself perform a miracle, for was he not a prophet after all? Their demands point to their ignorance about both prophet and scripture.

Their form of speech, infused with their internal psychology, did not understand the relationship between Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet. The Messenger is courteous with his Lord and Sustainer; he cannot demand things of Him, nor can he prevail over Him, “Say, ‘I only follow what has been revealed to me from my Sustainer.’” The Prophet cannot, as it were, “put words in God’s mouth.” He cannot forge or manipulate things. All he can do is to simply follow Allah’s instructions and thereby provide his people with divine guidance.

These dilly-dallying *mushriks* were asking for miracles despite the fact that the Qur’an was the most eclipsing miracle of them all. But they paid no heed to it because it was demanding them to think, and they do not want to think. They did not want any evi-



dence from Allah (ﷻ) that would expand their minds, rather they wanted evidence from God that would massage their egos, **“This [revelation] is a means of deep cognition from your Sustainer, and a guidance and grace for people who commit themselves [to Allah].”** These selfish *mushriks* were looking for miracles of the crude type, miracles that would have piqued their curiosity. Not so, however, with the miraculous Qur’an, which defies the human mind of that generation as well as that of all coming generations until the end of time. This Qur’an is not only a miracle of a fleeting moment, but a living miracle that will last forever.

The miracle that is the Qur’an stands on its own merits today, just as it did back when it was revealed. Though its potent supernaturalism is detectable by the mind, it is nonetheless a lighting rod: some minds marvel at it whereas others simply decide to “shut-off” and ignore it. Despite this reaction, the miracle-working of the Qur’an has been in progress for all these centuries and it will remain so, regardless of whether people agree or disagree with it.

The enchantment with the Qur’an, and the mental state engendered by it, has a profound effect on people who have not corrupted their God-given human nature. If only they lay open their minds and unlock their hearts, they will sense the profound effect on their thinking and the pronounced impact on their inner selves. This Qur’an supercedes thinkers and theoreticians, it also bypasses poets and writers. It goes equally to both the intellect and the sentiment.

The leaders and chiefs of the Qurayshī society were unwilling to listen to the Qur’an, **“Now those who are adverse to the truth say [to one another], ‘Do not listen to this Qur’an, but rather talk frivolously about it, so that you might gain the upper hand!’” (41:26).** This is what happens when the ego and personal interest, or even national interest, are at work in a person’s internal self without any consideration to the facts in the Qur’an, without any objective approach to the Qur’an, and with plenty of prejudice and hostility to its content and message. Even in today’s world there are Qurayshī parallels who treat the Qur’an with apathy and contempt.

The mouthpieces of ancient idols and present-day ideologies that have attempted to malign and discredit the Qur'an are simply vocalizing and amplifying the internal suggestions of Satan. It is well known that Satan deploys his *waswās*, *nazgh*, and *mass* (suggestions, inferences, and stirring). This lesson advises the committed Muslims to keep an eye on this internal undercurrent of Satan, and they do so as a matter of reading and absorbing the meanings of this holy Writ. But there are other people in this world who give free rein to these hints of Satan and then try to flood the world with their poisonous ideas about the Qur'an.

There is a history of 14 centuries of the Zionists' and imperialists' contempt for the Qur'an, not because they are unaware of its contents, but precisely because they know what the Qur'an is all about; were they not the ones who were disciplined and sorted out by this Qur'an and its true adherents before things went awry again. Looking around today, one cannot avoid being bombarded by every possible line of disinformation about this holy Scripture. They have been wracking their brains in trying to distract the Muslims themselves from their holy Qur'an. They want the Muslims to settle on a Qur'an of spiritual refinement and forget about a Qur'an of social justice. These Zionists and imperialists know very well that once the Muslims espouse this Qur'an in the way it was meant to be taken, the former will have to shut down their military bases, fold up their military occupations, and recall their transnational corporations from all Qur'anic territories. This is no time to "sing" the *āyāt* of the Qur'an; this is the time to drive our institutions, governments, plans, and strategies with those *āyāt*.

The imperialists and Zionists are in an all-out war against the convergence of this Qur'an with its long orphaned Muslim claimants. The United States working through Saudi Arabia and other governments in Arabian countries and elsewhere is actively looking for "moderate" Muslims. By that, they mean they are looking for halfwits who are willing to formulate an imperialist friendly Islam and Qur'an — an Islam and a Qur'an that can coexist and live side by side with Zionism and other forms of racism and economic disenfranchisement. In the past century the imperialists

and their Zionist gangsters were ripping the Muslim peoples apart with the ideologies of nationalism, scientific socialism, capitalism, and sectarianism. Now, thankfully, a new generation of committed Qur'anic Muslims is coming out of the womb of that painful past. It is not going to be moderate by the definitions of imperialism and Zionism; instead it is going to be assertive, primed toward self-determination, and liberation-minded. And in all this it will be guided by the sacred Book, **“This [Qur'an] is a means of perceptivity from your Sustainer, and a guidance and grace for people who commit themselves [to Allah and His power].”**

Going on a slight tangent, some say that the *āyah*, **“Hence, when the Qur'an is sounded, listen to it, and listen in silence, so that you might be graced with [Allah's] mercy,”** applies to Muslims who are in their *ṣalāh*. When the imam audibly recites the Qur'an as he leads the *ṣalāh*, all the other attendees are — per this *āyah* — required to listen but not loudly vocalize the Qur'an along with the imam. This is one of those instances in which Islamic schools of thought go in every direction with the best intentions. Some schools of thought adopt the view that a congregant (the Muslim who is following the imam) should not read any *āyāt* of the Qur'an whether the *ṣalāh* is read out loud or not, because the imam's recitation stands in for his. Another opinion holds that the congregant should not recite the Qur'an to himself except in the short interval where the imam pauses between the *Fātiḥah* and the ensuing *sūrah*. A third opinion allows the congregant to recite to himself in the silent *Zuhr* and *'Aṣr ṣalāhs*, but not in the audible *Maghrib*, *'Ishā'*, and *Fajr ṣalāhs*.<sup>673</sup>

In a complementary explanation of this *āyah*, there are those who say it came to inhibit the Muslims from speaking during the *ṣalāh*, as some of them arriving to the *ṣalāh* would greet the other congregants with the salutation of *salām*. Finally, it has been recorded that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to read the *Fātiḥah* out loud in the *ṣalāh* so that the others following him in the *ṣalāh* would repeat his words. What appears here to be a good method of group learning went on for a while until this *āyah* was revealed and made it mandatory for those who are following in their prayers to remain

silent.<sup>674</sup> Therefore, most, if not all, interpretations of this *āyah* restrict its meaning to the time of *ṣalāh*. And with this understanding some have said that if the Qur'an is recited at any other time besides *ṣalāh*, it would not be an infraction to speak while the Qur'an is being recited, such as from a radio station or through electronic devices, etc. Other explanations extend the meaning of this *āyah* to the times during which *khutbaḥs* (sermons) are delivered on *jumu'aḥs* or 'ids.

However, in looking at the same *āyah* more broadly, the reader will recognize that it is open-ended, and not necessarily curtailed by the time of *ṣalāh*. The aura and glory of the Qur'an demand as a matter of respect and courtesy that people listen to it whenever it is vocalized. With the exception of certain extenuating circumstances, human beings are required to pay attention when they hear the *āyāt* of the Qur'an.

### **Dhikr Is an Indispensable Part of Islam**

The end of this *sūrah* echoes its beginning: the consciousness of Allah (ﷻ) during times of common communion, public participation, or colossal *jamā'aḥs*. The concluding *āyāt* of this *sūrah* redirect man's attention to the galaxy within — the universe of the introverse,

**And be aware of your Sustainer in your own self with humility and awe, and without raising your voice early and late in the day; and do not allow yourself to be neglectful. Behold, those who are near to your Sustainer are never too proud to adjust to Him; and they extol His limitless glory, and prostrate themselves before Him [alone] (7:205–206).**

These two *āyāt* guide man to those times during the day (morning and evening) when he needs to think back, think of, rethink, and bethink himself of Allah (ﷻ) — a process that ought to heighten his awareness of Allah's majesty and resplendency. According to

Allah's own words, these are the prime times of calling and recalling Him, "...and extol your Sustainer's limitless glory and praise Him before the rising of the Sun and before its setting..." (20:130). This general counsel appears to have been given before the formal *ṣalāh* was enacted during the night of al-Isrā' — that is, during the Makkan period of revelation. The opportunities to receive Allah's mercy and to gain protection from His anger are myriad and unlimited, however the windows for maximizing this connection with Allah occur before sunup and before sundown. The proper etiquette is for one to do the *dhikr* of Allah without raising his voice, that is, no shouting and no howling.

One of the questions put to the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) by his companions was, "Is our Sustainer near so we address Him with a low voice? Or is He far so we address Him with a loud voice?" And the answer came from on high, "And if my conforming subjects ask you [O Prophet] about Me, I am near — I will respond to a caller's prayer if he calls upon Me" (2:186). In another incident during the Prophet's lifetime, some people began to raise their voices as they were calling on Allah (ﷻ) during their journeys. And so, the Prophet told them,

*O people! Compose yourselves. You are not calling on someone who is deaf or absent. The fact is that you are calling on someone who is all-hearing and nearby. He is nearer to you than the neck of your ride [camel].*<sup>675</sup>

The invocation of Allah here is not meant to be verbal or vocal only; it is rather introversive and in solitude. Allah's remembrance, recollection, and recognition should stir the soul, move the mind, and excite the heart. If there is no devotion, reverence, awe, and tenderness expressed inside a person's self then there really is no *dhikr* to speak about.

*Dhikr* is the emotional convergence of feelings within man about Allah's glory and status, His mercy and justice, and His power and pride. A person needs to ingrain these corresponding attributes of Allah (ﷻ) in the very core of his being so that he can emerge

with an enhanced consciousness of Allah. Once the tongue and heart, the lips and soul are in a combined hope of Allah's grace and a combined fear of His anger — when there is no screaming, noise, or singing and “*dhikr* passtime” — at that time a person is fulfilling this *āyah* in fact and in practice, **“And consciously recall your Sustainer in your silent self humbly and with awe, and without raising your voice... early in the morning and late in the day.”**

In this way the human heart remains connected to Allah (ﷻ). But these are not the only times to be in contact with Him. The consciousness of Allah has to be in man's heart at all times. Man has to be awake to and aware of Allah's continual monitoring. But at these two particular times of the day there is an exceptional access to Allah's vicinity. This is the time when night gives in to day and likewise day relinquishes itself to night. The Creator of life and its vicissitudes tells man that these times are opportune to access Him. This time location is when the human heart can “tune in” to the grandeur and brilliance of Allah. There is a synergy here between a material world (of nature) in changeover to Allah and an ethereal world (of man) in transition to Allah. Not to overemphasize the point, but remember that these instructions from on high come to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his patient companions in the midst of their struggle with a nefarious and absconding Makkan society,

**Hence, bear with patience whatever they [the enemy *mushriks*] may say, and extol your Sustainer's limitless glory and praise Him before the rising of the Sun and before its setting; and extol His glory, too, during some of the hours of the night as well as during the hours of the day, so that you may be poised (20:130);**

**Hence, [O securely committed Muslim], bear you with patience whatever they [the *mushriks*] may say, and extol your Sustainer's limitless glory and admiration before the rising of the Sun and before its setting; and in the night, too, extol His glory, and at every prayer's end (50:39–40);**

**And bear in mind and conscience your Sustainer's name before sunrise and before sunset and during some of the night, and prostrate yourself before Him, and extol His limitless glory throughout the long night (76:25–26).**

It goes without saying that these instructions were revealed before the five timely *ṣalāḥs* were made “official.” The implication is that once the five *ṣalāḥs* were mandated these *āyāt* were superseded. The fact of the matter is that *dhikr* is an ongoing state of consciousness within which the “technical” *ṣalāḥ* is performed. *Dhikr* cannot be contracted into five daily *ṣalāḥs*, nor can it be replaced by them. *Dhikr* may be fulfilled outside the perimeters of the daily *ṣalāḥ* — what is mandatory and what is not. *Dhikr* may be expressed by words and it may be conveyed by feelings. It need not fit into the technicalities of the known compulsory or optional *ṣalāḥ*. In point of fact, *dhikr* is much more than *ṣalāḥ*. *Dhikr* is to *ṣalāḥ* what *infāq* is to *zakāḥ*. *Dhikr* is the ongoing, extended, and accompanying consciousness of Allah's mercy and power — publicly and personally, pertaining to trivial and to grave matters, whether one is stationary or in movement, and in physical or in emotional vocations. Only Allah (ﷻ) knows how these times of day — before sunrise, before sunset, and in the “dead of night” — can affect man's orientation toward Him. He knows these things whereas man does not; therefore, man is in need of His advice.

**“And do not allow yourself to be thoughtless [of Him].”** Man should not be inconsiderate of Allah. Man should be bound to Him by the words that proclaim and exalt Him, and more importantly with the feelings and emotions in the heart that laud and extol Him. This *dhikr* has to be worked into the pulse and rhythm of the heart. From here forward, a person of *dhikr* can move into any demanding or stimulating part of life and not be reactive to its physical and material dimensions. With Allah beating in his heart he does everything and anything without being ashamed in front of Him. How could he when Allah (ﷻ) is embedded in his heart and conscience? *Dhikr* is meant to withstand and overcome all the physical objects and tangible substances that weigh heavily on in-

dividuals who carry a struggle on their shoulders. All other “*dhikrs*” are spiritual anti-depressants or “feel-good” enterprises detached from jihad in its consummated meaning.

Man needs to be conscious and cognizant of Allah (ﷻ) so that he does not forget Him. Man’s heart has to be aroused and resurgent to His compassionate and powerful presence. Man needs this attachment, alliance, and connection with Allah. Otherwise, Satan will occupy the vacancy in man’s internal self, “**And if it should happen that a prompting from Satan should stir you up [against Allah], seek Allah’s safety; for certain He is all-hearing, all-knowing.**” An excellent example in this regard are the angels who are immune to Satan, and have no carnal desires to struggle with. That being the case, they are always in a God-consciousness state (*dhikr*). They praise Him, they thank Him, they appreciate Him, and they herald Him, and hence, they show no false pride or weaknesses,

**Behold, those who are near unto your Sustainer are never too proud to conform to Him; and they extol His timeless glory, and prostrate themselves before Him [alone] (7:206).**

Conforming to Allah (*‘ibādah*) and the consciousness of Allah (*dhikr*) are essential to this *dīn*. Islam is not something theoretical, it is not a heavenly utopia somewhere in the imagination of man, and it is not some theological arena of disputation. It is a *dīn* where man becomes so involved with Allah that Allah becomes so involved with him. And life, as Allah (ﷻ) shaped and destined it, requires this “emotional romance” and “militant struggle” simultaneously, but without any incompatibilities or contradictions as some Sufis understand Salafis and as some Salafis think of Sufis. The task of *khilāfah* is going to require the infusion of a Sufi into a Salafi and vice versa, just to take the two predominant polarizations in today’s real Muslim world. Truth be told, both these trends are being manipulated by imperialism through its favorite regimes in Muslim lands. Over the last decade or so, since 9/11, the imperialist sponsored program has been to phase out the Salafis, who have out-



lived their usefulness, and phase in the Sufis. What both Sufis and Salafis have to understand is that together, they both are going to have to phase out the American imperialists and the Israeli Zionists who are pulling the strings of polarization and tension among Muslims. The latter should be reporting to Allah and not to financial lords and religious hierarchies all the way from Arabia to America.

The Arabic phrasing in the last *āyah* contains the words, “... *wa-lahū yasjudūn*: ...and to Him they flex into prostration.” When this *āyah* is read or recited it requires the reciter and listener to perform a *sajdah* (prostration). In the way the *sūrah*s of the Qur’an have been organized this is the first *āyah* of *sujūd*. No *mujtahid* disagrees about this being a *sajdah āyah*, the reason being that the location of the meaning of *sujūd* occurs in the course of a reference to angels who prostrate (*yasjudūn*) to Allah (ﷻ), thereby encouraging the committed Muslims to do the same. The Prophet (ﷺ), in demonstrating that the Muslims can be as keen and observant as the angels, performed the *sajdah* after reciting this *āyah*. The prerequisites for such a *sajdah* are akin to those of the *ṣalāh*, that is, a Muslim should be *ṭāhir* (state of purity), have an intention (*nīyah*), and face toward the *qiblah*.<sup>676</sup>

In conclusion, this *sūrah* came to explain what is meant by the *tawhīd* of Allah (ﷻ). Man learns that Allah is one and he has to understand and affirm His singularity when the covenant and commitment of man belong to Allah — and only to Allah (ﷻ). Man has to avow and believe that his lifelong presence in this world owes Allah a sustained conformity and compliance with His scriptures and prophets. Man should also understand that the laws revealed by Allah in scripture and the struggles that the prophets had to endure to try to uphold these laws are an integral part of this overall love and care that Allah has for man on earth. Man has to uphold the fact that Allah is indivisible. He cannot be one in essence and many in descriptions. His descriptions are a reflection of His singular divinity and authority combined.

A second important aspect of this *sūrah* is that Allah (ﷻ) cannot be a deity without being an authority. The contemporary secular mind and culture, having a European history and origin,

was unable to reconcile with this fact, and thereby subsequently led the rest of humanity to the current bewildering world across five continents that is governed by the law of the jungle.

Thirdly, this *sūrah* outlines the necessity of Allah's *wahy* (revelation of scripture), as well as the role of prophets, who have the outstanding character that qualifies to explain this uniform historical revelation to their peoples, communities, and societies. Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) act as unique catalysts between the inspiration of scripture — the word of Allah (ﷻ) — and their masses, fellowships, and cultures, which were on the verge of self-destruction and annihilation. Further down in the *sūrah*, there are *āyāt* that explain the coming final day, final judgement, and final life. The materialistic and carnal societies of the modern age are in dire need of acknowledging this fact, which at this point, needs to be global. Individuals here or there are not going to be able to tip the balance of salvation, unless they are able to orient masses of people to a conviction and public acknowledgment of the final life and its accountability consequences — a conviction that runs through their everyday thoughts.

Fourth, this *sūrah* highlights the legal constituent of scripture and Allah's will. It is explained beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Lawmaker and Lawgiver is Allah (ﷻ) and no one else. The legal framework of man's society and life are set out in this Qur'anic scripture. Day-to-day and generation-to-generation idiosyncracies may have a modifying or qualifying impact on the general rule; but they cannot annul or contradict the divine legal system presented in the Qur'an.

Fifth, the *āyāt* herein demonstrate that the normal way to proceed as a conforming subject of Allah (ﷻ) is to avoid conforming to ancient, ancestral orthodoxies — what is characterized as blind *taqlid* (imitation of a folk tradition). There is a forceful assault by the inspirational words of the Muhammadi Qur'an to do away with any reference to traditions or culture as a point of reference in explaining the moral and legal constitution of Islam and the Qur'an, **“And if they [the traditionalist *kāfirs*] commit an offense they say [rationalizing it], ‘We found our ancestors doing it and Allah has ordered us to’”** (7:28).

Sixth, this *sūrah* promotes rational thinking and elevates deep thoughts. Thus do committed Muslims anchor themselves into the meanings of this discursive and lucid Scripture. Allah (ﷻ) assails those who demote and diminish His authority, having no evidence to do so, **“...and that you couple with Allah other authorities/deities for which He has not given validation”** (7:33). He asks so as to have people reconsider their errant thoughts, **“Do you not reason?”** (7:169). He presents the truth in a metaphorical narrative, desiring that covenant deniers will see the light, **“Narrate [such] stories for them in the hope that they will think”** (7:176). Another *āyah* attempts to ignite the human mind, **“Do they not think? [Realizing] that their fellowman [Muhammad] is not possessed by a jinn?”** (7:184). And in the next *āyah*, the mind is encouraged to go where no man has gone before to investigate, discover, and probe, **“Have they not looked into the dominion of the heavens and earth and whatever [else] Allah has created?”** (7:185). Another thought-provoking *āyah* reads,

**And We have propped up for the Hellfire many jinn and humans who have hearts but do not discern with them, and they have eyes but cannot see with them, and they have ears but cannot hear with them. Those are the equivalents of domesticated beasts; rather they are more brutish. They are in a mental slumber... (7:179).**

Seventh, an extremely important reminder presented in this *sūrah* is the pivotal role of inaccessible knowledge, meaning knowledge that man receives through revelation and scripture, and not through his own investigation and discovery. Man has a tendency to speak about the unknown when he knows nothing about it. Ignorance of the metaphysical does not qualify man to comment on it. Toward this end are the following *āyāt*,

**Do you attribute to Allah that which you do not know? (7:28);**

**And you equate with Allah [as authority] that for which there is no scriptural validation and you ascribe to Allah what you do not know (7:33).**

Eighth, a critical component of this *sūrah* is that Allah (ﷻ) created life and matter both. He created man and universe. And He assigned physical laws to all there is around man — the cosmos, the Earth, the calibration of the Solar System, night and day, the law of gravity, etc. He creates and arranges winds, rains, seasons, agricultural output, fertility, and all other physical interactions and calculations,

**And He it is who sends forth the winds as a glad tidings of His coming grace — so that, when they have brought heavy clouds, We may drive them toward dead land and cause thereby water to descend; and by this means do We cause all manner of fruit to come forth. Even thus shall We cause the dead to come forth: [and this] you ought to keep in mind (7:57).**

He created man from one bio-source. And from it He created its sexual and complementary counterpart. He determined the sexes, their attraction, codependence, procreation, and the manner in which people are born,

**It is He who has created you [all] out of one living entity, and out of it brought into being its mate, so that the mate might incline [with love] toward it [its counterpart]. And so, when he has submerged her, she conceives [what at first is] a light burden, and continues to bear it. Then, when she grows heavy [with child], they both call unto Allah, their Sustainer, “If You indeed grant us a sound [child], we shall most certainly be among the grateful!” (7:189).**

Allah informs that man is the most dignified of His earthly creation, and that Satan, the patron of all criminals, is an avowed

enemy of the descendants of Adam (ﷺ). Consistent with the wiles of Satan are the exposed errors of the Children of Israel, all of which combine to make man's struggle on earth an unforgiving one. However, man has access to a standing shelter and he can find that shelter if he seeks and finds Allah.

What this writer considers to be important to the contemporary generation is Allah's emphasis on the fact that He is the originator of social laws (*sunan*). His social laws are as incontrovertible as His physical laws. What has happened in human society is that modernities and technologies have been able to get a grip on physical laws but have been pathetically deficient in grasping social laws — both of them originating from Allah (ﷻ) and both of them working in tandem with each other. A dent in one set of laws will have its impact on the other set of laws.

In this way, Allah (ﷻ) destroys cultures and civilizations, nations and states because of the moral degradation that takes its legal course until finally a particular society or nation-state has condemned itself to the application of Allah's social law. No social order in history has ever been able to evade Allah's *sunan* (social laws). An existential punishment of a nation or people may be long in coming, but once it comes the consequences are devastating, decimating, and final.

One of those social laws described in this *sūrah* is that Allah will test some peoples and nations with hard times. These hard times will either improve the future conditions of such nations or destroy them. And the particular outcome depends on whether these societies conform to Allah (ﷻ) or deny Him.

Another of Allah's social laws is that societies and civilizations are not destroyed "in a vacuum." An eruption of physical laws in the form of earthquakes and floods has always followed the dishonoring of Allah's *sunan*. At the core of this dynamic is the seminal crime: writing off Allah's authority in their moral and legal codes. The circumstances of Mūsá (ﷺ) and the Children of Israel in Egypt are prime examples of how the divine physical and social laws work with each other. In the end, no power on earth could prevent the condemnation of the Egyptian superpower by the

power of Allah (ﷻ) whose social laws were on the side of the oppressed Israelis.

The story of the Children of Israel has been amply highlighted in Judeo-Christian literature. But nowhere is the truth more precisely presented than right here in the Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) relates that the oppressed Israelis qualified for a potential leading position because of their patience and fortitude, but true to their recalcitrant and petulant character, they subsequently disqualified themselves due to their recklessness and foolhardiness.

A glance at today's Muslims reveals that much of these facts — even though they are written here for eternity in this good Book, and even though Muslims do read this Book — are absent from their daily lives and their social ambiance. Is it any wonder that Muslims have been without self-determination for the better part of at least 100 years? The consequences of ignorance ride upon God-ordained social laws. And that also applies to those who serenade about their Islam but in reality offer nothing along the guiding lines of this impeccable inspiration and complete Qur'an.

At one time, in the not too distant past, many traditional and cultural Muslims thought they were saved by the inheritance of a mechanical religion and the observance of habitual personal rituals throughout their lifetimes. This type of “understanding” has delivered the mass of Muslims to where they are today. Their reliance on alien philosophies, their adoption of strange ideologies, and their confidence in scholarly opinions formulated a millennium ago are not going to mitigate the punishment they are receiving from all corners of the globe. Given all the advanced knowledge this Qur'an has to offer, today's Muslims have basically dismissed most, if not all, of the meanings explained above with their emphasis on the intonation of the words of the Qur'an, giving some *qāri's* the opportunity to make a living out of reciting the Qur'an at birthdays, weddings, and funerals.

What adds insult to this injury is that there is another pack of “modern and moderate” Muslims who attribute the decline of Muslims to the core meanings of this Qur'an — as if they ever studied its core meanings to begin with. These turncoats want the Muslims

to abandon the Qur'an altogether and acquire the "modernity, technology, and industrialization" of Europe and America so that they can catch up with the real world. These "jāhils of modernity" are as ignorant of Islam and the Qur'an as the cultural traditionalists. Had either of them bothered to read and understand this Book they would realize that it has the capacity to build a civilizational orientation in the full meaning of the concept. Anyone who reads and understand this Scripture would know that it fortifies knowledge, spurs investigation, encourages discovery, enhances the mind, and places man in the advanced position of utilizing all that is in nature, the world, existence, and the universe to be at the service of fellowman.

This winds up the *tafsīr* of *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, insofar as this humble writer's capacity in understanding Allah's ever-giving Qur'an is concerned. As is the case most of the time, the Qur'an is so fertile in its meanings that it keeps on giving. Were this writer to reread and rewrite the meanings of this *sūrah*, he would have no option but to supplement his work here with more corroborative information. It is not this Qur'an that runs short on meanings; rather it is man's feeble mind that remains in need of more information, experience, and struggle to bring out the enduring meanings of this eternal Scripture. If we were accurate we ask Allah (ﷻ) to accept from us and to reward us; and if we were inaccurate we ask Him to correct us and we pray to Him to forgive us. Our success is contingent upon His grace and assistance, *wa-mā tawfiqī illā bi-allāhi 'alayhi tawakkaltu wa-ilayhi al-ma'āb*. ■

## Endnotes

330 William H. Gentz (editor), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*. (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: The Abingdon Press, 1986), pp. 454–55.

**Wilhelm Dilthey** (1833–1911) – German philosopher, best known for the way he distinguished between the natural and human sciences. Dilthey saw his work as contributing to a “Critique of Historical Reason” that would expand the scope of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* by examining the epistemological conditions of the human sciences as well as of the natural sciences. Both kinds of science take their departure from ordinary life and experience, but whereas the natural sciences seek to focus on the way things behave independently of human involvement, the human sciences take account of this very involvement. The natural sciences use external observation and measurement to construct an objective domain of nature that is abstracted from the fullness of lived experience. The human sciences (humanities and social sciences), by contrast, help to define what Dilthey calls the *historical world*. By making use of inner as well as outer experience, the human sciences preserve a more direct link with man’s original sense of life than do the natural sciences. Whereas the natural sciences seek explanations of nature, connecting the discrete representations of outer experience through hypothetical generalizations and causal laws, the human sciences aim at an understanding that articulates the fundamental structures of historical life given in lived experience. Finding lived experience to be inherently connected and meaningful, Dilthey opposed traditional atomistic and associationist psychologies and developed a descriptive psychology that has been recognized as anticipating phenomenology. While many of Dilthey’s works have been translated from German and published posthumously, he passed away before putting it into writing himself (source: <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/biographical/dilthey-wilhelm-1833-1911/v-1/sections/foundation-of-the-human-sciences>).



**Heinrich Rickert** (1863–1936) – German neo-Kantian philosopher, born in Danzig. He received his degree in 1888 from the University of Strasbourg. In 1891 he began lecturing at Freiburg, succeeding Alois Riehl as professor in 1894. In 1916 he went to Heidelberg as successor to Wilhelm Windelband. Rickert belonged to the southwestern school of neo-Kantianism. His main efforts were devoted to a study of the logical and epistemological foundations of the natural sciences and to the historical disciplines in the hope of arriving at a “unity of reality and values.” He departed from Wilhelm





Dilthey in his criticism of Dilthey's subjective approach to the understanding of historical reality and in his attempt to find a set of more objective criteria; his departure from Windelband consisted in rejecting Windelband's separation of natural and historical disciplines and offering instead a theory that considered all reality to be historical. Among his principal works are *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft* (*Cultural Science and Natural Science*, 1899), *Die Philosophie des Lebens* (*The Philosophy of Life*, 1920), and *Die Logik des Prädikats und das Problem der Ontologie* (*Predicamental Logic and the Problem of Ontology*, 1930) (source: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/rickert-heinrich-1863-1936>).

**Ernst Troeltsch** (1865–1923) – refer to **Endnote 350** in Volume 12.

**Josiah Royce** (1855–1916) – American objective idealist philosopher. He was one of the most influential philosophers of the “period of classical American philosophy,” which lasted from the end of the 19th century through the early-20th century. Along with the British philosopher F.H. Bradley, he was also one of the two important English-speaking philosophers of that period who defended idealism. Born in a California mining town, he studied the German idealists and later taught at Harvard for three decades. Royce's key works include *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885), *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (1892), *The Conception of God* (1895), *The World and the Individual* (1900–1901), *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908), and *The Problem of Christianity* (1913) (source: [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Josiah\\_Royce](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Josiah_Royce)).



**Karl Mannheim** (1893–1947) – Hungarian-born sociologist, one of the founding fathers of classical sociology. Mannheim rates as a founder of the “sociology of knowledge” — the study of the relationship between human thought and the social context. Mannheim used the word *ideology* in an almost pejorative sense, reflecting a “false consciousness” based on the thought of those in the ruling class who strive to maintain the status quo in society. This he contrasted with *utopia*, or the thought of the oppressed who sought to improve society. Mannheim's work was rejected by the Frankfurt School, including Max Horkheimer and others, who saw it as a threat to Marxism. Although he called his approach *relationism*, the understanding that truth is not abstract and disembodied but rather depends on the social context, Mannheim failed to adequately address the relativistic nature of his theory to the satisfaction of his critics, nor could he successfully synthesize



the different beliefs that he saw emerging from different social experiences. Nevertheless, his work remained popular, albeit controversial, and inspired debate on issues of leadership and social consensus in efforts to establish peaceful, prosperous societies. Mannheim published his famous *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1929) while in Frankfurt (source: [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Karl\\_Mannheim](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Karl_Mannheim)).

331 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 454–55.

**Michael Polanyi** (1891–1976) – Hungarian-British polymath whose thought and work extended across physical chemistry, economics, and philosophy. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. Together with John Baker, Polanyi founded the Society for Freedom in Science and opposed the Soviet Union’s socialist rule over the sciences. Polanyi’s work as a scientist made significant contributions in the area of physical chemistry. Based on his experiences as a natural scientist, Polanyi turned his attention to the philosophy of science. He argued against dominant theories of positivism and explicated the importance of understanding *tacit knowledge* — unspoken knowledge that underlies scientific theories. While the dominant philosophers of science focused on logic and linguistic analyses of scientific theories, Polanyi highlighted the role of pre-linguistic, implicit understanding (tacit knowledge) in developing scientific theories. His notion of tacit knowledge was a precursor to the idea of paradigm by Thomas Kuhn and ideas held by subsequent philosophers of science, such as Feyerabend. Also, Polanyi’s concept of tacit knowledge is an important paradigm for the development of knowledge management. Some of his key works include *Science, Faith, and Society* (1946), *The Logic of Liberty* (1951), *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (1958), *The Study of Man* (1964), and *The Tacit Dimension* (1967) (source: [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Michael\\_Polanyi](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Michael_Polanyi)).



**H. Richard Niebuhr** (1894–1962) – refer to **Endnote 354** in Volume 12.

332 **George F. Will** (1941–present) – American journalist and pundit known for espousing political conservatism, particularly in his columns for the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* magazine. Will has expounded upon his political views in *Statecraft as Soulcraft: What Government Does* (1983), *The New Season: A Spectator’s Guide to the 1988 Election* (1987), and *Restoration: Congress, Term Limits, and the Recovery of Deliberative Democracy* (1992).



**Ronald Wilson Reagan** (1911–2004) – refer to **Endnote 48** in Volume 4.

333 **George Herbert Walker Bush** (1924–2018) – forty-first President of the United States; served as vice president under President Ronald Reagan for two four-year terms. He was also the father of George W. Bush, the 43rd President. Born in Milton, Massachusetts, George H.W. Bush fought in WWII and was elected to the US House of Representatives in 1966, serving two terms for the State of Texas. Bush was later appointed to several important positions, including US ambassador to the United Nations in 1971, head of the Republican National Committee during the Watergate scandal, US envoy to China, and director of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1976.



As CIA director, he commissioned Operation Condor, a CIA-supported collaboration between South American military dictatorships that kidnapped, tortured, murdered, or disappeared thousands of political dissidents — including former Chilean Foreign Affairs Minister Orlando Letelier, who was assassinated on American soil during Bush's directorship of the agency.

As president, Bush's 1989 invasion of Panama — characterized by the US media as a successful invasion to oust strongman General Manuel Antonio Noriega (a one-time CIA "dirty-works" contractor) and to put Panama back on a path of democracy and freedom — was condemned at the time by the UN General Assembly as a "flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of [Panama]." According to Human Rights Watch it "inflicted a toll in civilian lives that was at least... twelve to thirteen times higher than the casualties suffered by US troops."

In Bush's military follow-up to Panama, the Second Gulf War (1990–1991), almost universally depicted by the corporate Zionist-controlled Western media as a courageous confrontation against the dictatorial Ṣaddām Ḥusayn. Inconvenient details that have been scrubbed from the redacted and sanitized histories of US presidents include the fact that Ṣaddām's evils had been enabled by Bush, who facilitated sales of military equipment to the Iraqi leader and continued to protect him from sanctions even after he massacred thousands of Kurds with poison gas at Ḥalabjah in 1988, not to mention his use of "banned" chemical weapons against hundreds of thousands of Iranian soldiers in the First Gulf War (1980–1988). Through Bush's choreography, the Second Gulf War was sold to the American public with deliberately fabricated lies about Iraqi soldiers ripping babies from incubators; and carefully manufactured coverups of atrocities such as the annihilation of al-ʿĀmiriyah bomb shelter, which killed at least 400 civilians, and the use of enough depleted uranium weaponry to toxify the land for 4.5 billion years.

As a consequence of this war, Bush extorted some \$600 billion in security guarantees from the Gulf Arabian potentates, who had been scared out of their wits by the very Ṣaddām they had pumped full of cash to defeat the vanguard of the Islamic Republic in the First Gulf War. This \$600 billion cash infusion into the US economy was the major catalyst of the famed tech-boom of the 1990s, which is generally (and wrongly) credited to the Clinton administration (1993–2000).

At the end of the Second Gulf War, Bush's approval rating at home was 90%, but just a year-and-a-half later, around election time, it was down to 27%, ostensibly because of the poor economy. However, the real story behind Bush's precipitous decline in popularity has to do with his falling out of favor with the Zionists who had earlier paved his way to the presidency. After the war, Bush came out against the request of a right-wing Israeli government, led by then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, to receive billions in loan guarantees from the United States. Bush demanded an obligation from Shamir that the money would not be used for land grabs and housing for Zionist squatters in the West Bank. Shamir refused, and Bush urged Congress not to give Israel the guarantees. At the height of the clash over the issue, Bush went after the pro-Israel lobby (AIPAC) in Washington. He held a press conference in the White House and said, "We're up against very strong and effective groups that go up to Capitol Hill. I hear today there were something like a thousand lobbyists on the Hill working on the other side of this question." Referring to himself, Bush then added that "we've only got one lonely little guy down here doing it." End result: Bush did not win a second term, losing the election to Bill Clinton, who was later to receive Israel's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Distinction, from Israeli President Shimon Peres (6-19-2013) for "...your unwavering commitment to the Jewish people and your moving support for the State of Israel [that] will always be cherished by each and every one of us."

The US-led "humanitarian intervention" in Somalia initiated by Bush in 1992 quickly degenerated into an assault on the Somali society replete with bombings of hospitals and gatherings of elders, unprovoked shootings of unarmed civilians, and culminated in the slaughter of some 1,000 Somalis in the Battle of Mogadishu — by American soldiers heard repeating the slogan "the only good Somali is a dead Somali" (parts of the biography above sourced from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/bush-legacy-speaking-ill-truths-dead-duty-181216090213478.html>).

**Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** – refer to **Endnote 449** in Volume 8; cited in some historical capacity in nearly every volume thus far.

**Ṣaddām Ḥusayn** (1937–2006) – refer to **Endnote 21** in Volume 2, **Endnote 550** in Volume 8, **Endnote 290** in Volume 10.

**Zeus** – the supreme god of ancient Greek mythology.

**Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani** (1934–2017) – Iranian president (1989–1997), politician, businessman, and *āyatullāh*. Born to a prosperous farmer near the town of Rafsanjan, in the Kerman region of Iran, Rafsanjani moved to Qom in 1948 to pursue his religious studies, and in 1958 he became a disciple of *Āyatullāh* Khomeini. Rafsanjani became a *hujjah al-islām*, the second highest Shi'ī Muslim rank, before eventually rising to *āyatullāh*.



He opposed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's "modernization" (westernization) program, and when Imam Khomeini was exiled from Iran in 1962, Rafsanjani became his chief fundraiser inside the country. He spent the years 1975–1978 in jail in Iran on charges of links with left-wing terrorists.

With the shah's overthrow and Imam Khomeini's return to Iran in 1979, Rafsanjani became one of the Imam's key aides. He helped found the Islamic Republican Party, served on the Revolutionary Council, and was acting interior minister during the early years of the Islamic Revolution. In 1980 he was also elected to and became speaker of the Majles (Islamic Consultative Assembly). As the dominant voice in the Majles for the next nine years, Rafsanjani gradually emerged as the second most powerful figure in Iran's government. He was intimately involved in Iran's prosecution of the First Gulf War (1980–1988), and he was thought to have persuaded Imam Khomeini to agree to the ceasefire of August 1988 that effectively ended the war.

After Imam Khomeini's death in June 1989, Rafsanjani was elected as Iran's president by an overwhelming margin. He favored reducing Iran's international isolation and renewing its ties with Europe as part of a strategy to use foreign investment and free enterprise to revive the country's war-torn economy. Domestically, he implemented family-planning practices, in effect reversing previous policies encouraging population growth. Critics considered him to be Iran's foremost advocate of class-based trickle-down economics.

Rafsanjani was reelected in 1993, though his victory was not as overwhelming as in 1989; voter turnout was significantly lower, and he won only two-thirds of the votes in 1993 as compared with more than nine-tenths four years earlier. Barred by the constitution from serving a third consecutive term in office, Rafsanjani nevertheless remained active in political life, serving several terms as head of the Committee to Determine the Expediency of the Islamic Order, a body created to mediate disputes between the Majles and the Council of Guardians (itself empowered to vet legislation and oversee elections).

Following Mohammad Khatami's two-term presidency (1997–2005), Rafsanjani again sought the presidency in 2005. Although he was touted by the Western media as the favorite, Rafsanjani failed to secure a majority by

a significant margin and was defeated by the mayor of Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In the presidential election of 2009 Rafsanjani was a vocal critic of the incumbent, President Ahmadinejad, and made clear his support of the “Green” candidate, Mir Hossein Mousavi, a former prime minister (1981–1989). When Ahmadinejad was declared the victor by a large margin, Rafsanjani himself was conspicuously absent from the public sphere and noticeably silent in the days that followed the election — a silence some observers suggested belied his activity behind the scenes (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hashemi-Rafsanjani>).

**Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh** (1882–1967) – lawyer, professor, author, governor, parliament member, finance minister, and first elected prime minister of Iran; he fought both internal corruption and foreign interference, enacted social reforms, and nationalized the Iranian oil industry. In 1953, in the CIA’s first successful dismantling of a foreign government, he was overthrown by a British-American coup, arrested, and tried as a traitor in a military tribunal court.



Born in Tehran to Mirza Hedayat Ashtiani, Iran’s minister of finance, and Najm al-Saltaneh, closely related to the ruling Qajar dynasty, Mohammad was raised by the latter after his father died of cholera. Years later, when a national identity card system was introduced in Iran, he chose the surname of Mosaddegh (meaning *true and authentic*) for himself.

During the constitutionalist movement of 1905–1911, Mosaddegh actively participated in the events that led to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in place of arbitrary monarchical rule. He studied political science in Tehran and in 1909, continued his education in Paris. After spending a few years in Iran due to chronic fatigue syndrome, he returned to his law studies in Switzerland at the University of Neuchatel. In June 1914, he became the first Iranian to receive a doctorate in law, and returned to Iran only a day before the start of WWI.

In 1917, Mosaddegh accepted a job in the government as Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Finance where he tried to combat corruption and even brought convictions to several individuals. In 1919 he chose self-exile in Switzerland in protest over an agreement between Iran and Britain that he found very disturbing. The main provision of this agreement was handing over to British advisers the supervision of Iran’s army and financial systems. Fearing the worst for Iran he feverishly campaigned against it in Europe and wrote to the League of Nations asking for help in this matter. Mosaddegh returned to Iran after the agreement was rejected in the Majles.

Mosaddegh’s reputation as an honest, just, and concerned politician preceded him upon his return to Iran. As he traveled throughout Fars province,

he was greeted warmly by locals and received an offer to become their governor, which he accepted. After a few months, however, he resigned this post in protest of the 1921 British-inspired coup in Tehran that ultimately led to the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. After the Fars governorship, Mosaddegh served as finance minister in Prime Minister Ghavam's government and was later appointed minister of foreign affairs during the premiership of his friend Moshir al-Dowleh. This was followed by a short term as Governor of Azerbaijan province.

In 1923, Mosaddegh was elected to the 5th Majles and began his historic opposition to the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty by British supported Reza Khan, who was at that time the prime minister of Iran. He foresaw the return to dictatorship in Iran when "...one man is to be king, prime minister, and magistrate!" As Mosaddegh predicted, life under the tyrannical reign of Reza Shah was harsh and oppressive; in fact the political climate became so unbearable that he had good reason to fear for his life. In 1928, he voluntarily withdrew from social and political activism and retreated to his village of Ahmadabad located about 100 km outside of Tehran. During this period, which lasted over a decade, he occupied his time reading and farming, conducting experiments to improve crop production, and sharing the knowledge he acquired with other farmers in the village.

On July 26, 1940, Reza Shah's police squad unexpectedly arrived at Mosaddegh's residence, searching and ransacking his house. Although no incriminating evidence against him was found, he was taken to the central prison in Tehran. Mosaddegh was interrogated and, without being informed of any charges against him, transferred to a prison citadel in Birjand, a city in northeast Iran. Well aware of the fate of many others who dared to oppose Reza Shah's arbitrary rule, he expected to be killed. The harshest blow to Mosaddegh resulting from his imprisonment was the effect it had on his 13-year-old daughter, Khadijeh, who had witnessed her father's brutal arrest and forced transfer to Birjand prison. The highly sensitive Khadijeh was deeply traumatized and spent the rest of her life in psychiatric hospitals. Mosaddegh later said that this tragedy was the cruelest punishment that could have ever been inflicted on him.

Reza Shah released Mosaddegh from prison in November 1940, transferring him to Ahmadabad "to live there, until he dies." A year later his house arrest ended when the British forced the abdication of Reza Shah, and his 22 year-old son, Mohammad Reza, ascended to the throne. Having returned to political activities, Mosaddegh was elected with overwhelming support as the Tehran representative to the 14th Majles in 1944. During his tenure in the Majles, Mosaddegh passionately fought for Iran's political and economic independence from foreigners, including addressing the highly unfair oil agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (later to become British Petroleum or BP), a goal for which he received overwhelming popular support.

The contemporary history of Iran has been intertwined with oil, a highly sought after energy source by the imperial West. It all began in 1901 when a 60-year exclusive right was given to William Knox D'Arcy, a British subject, for oil exploration and exploitation in Iran's southern provinces. In 1908, oil was struck and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) was established. Just before the start of WWI in 1914, the British government purchased 51% of the company's shares. The British thus created a beachhead and practically colonized the southern west corner of Iran, directly and indirectly interfering in the political affairs of the entire country. AIOC even cheated on the meager 16% profit-sharing payment to Iran and treated Iranian oil workers with contempt and racism in their own land.

It all came to a head in July 1946 when about 6,000 Iranian oil workers went on a strike in the oil city of Aghajari. Their clash with government troops resulted in more than 200 dead and wounded workers. Mosaddegh envisioned an Iran that was independent, free, and democratic. He believed no country could be politically independent and free unless it first achieved economic independence. He sought to renegotiate and reach an equitable and fair restitution of Iranian rights with AIOC but was faced with intransigence by the company. To put an end to 150 years of British political interference, economic exploitation, and plundering of Iran's national resources, Mosaddegh engineered the nationalization of the oil industry. Iran's main priority in this action was not revenue. As Mosaddegh put it, "The moral aspect of oil nationalization is more important than its economic aspect."

Mosaddegh first presented the idea of nationalization to the Majles mandated "Oil Commission" on March 8, 1951. The following day the National Front, a coalition of several parties, held a huge rally in Baharestan square in front of the Majles in support of oil nationalization. On the eve of the Iranian New Year, on March 20, 1951 (Esfand 29, 1329) the National Front bill for oil nationalization received the final approval from the Senate, only a few days after unanimously being approved by the Majles deputies. A month later, Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh was nominated for the position of Prime Minister, which he won by the votes of nearly 90% of the representatives present.

The dispute with the disbanded Anglo-Iranian Oil Company caused increasing tension between Iran and Britain. The British government imposed economic sanctions on Iran and threatened Iran with a military attack. In June 1951, the Iranian government discovered a British spy network that revealed subversive activities by a large number of Iranian politicians and journalists, including communists who were receiving bribes from the British government and the AIOC. In response, the Iranian government closed the British consulate. The British government reacted by calling their ambassador, Francis Shepherd, back to London.



In October 1951, Prime Minister Mosaddegh traveled to New York to personally defend Iran's right to nationalize its oil industry before the UN Security Council. The British government, looking for support, had taken its case to the United Nations for a hearing. Mosaddegh gave a dramatic and successful presentation, demonstrating that Britain's oil profits in 1950 alone were more than what it paid to Iran during the previous half century.



Mosaddegh then headed for Washington, DC where he met with President Harry S. Truman. His visit was covered widely in newspapers, magazines, television, and theatrical newsreels. He asked for US mediation in the dispute with England and requested financial assistance in the form of a loan. This did not materialize, and he left empty-handed after nearly six weeks in the United States.

On his return to Iran in November 1951, he stopped at Farouk Airport in Cairo, Egypt where he was greeted by thousands of admirers who chanted "Long live Mosaddegh" and "Long live Iran." By January 1952, Mosaddegh was named *Time* magazine's Man of the Year, his second *Time* cover in a span of seven months. Mosaddegh traveled to The Hague, Netherlands and presented nearly 200 documents to the International Court regarding the highly exploitative nature of the AIOC and the extent of its political intervention in the Iranian political system. "There is no political or moral yardstick by which the court can measure its judgement in the case of nationalization of the oil industry in Iran," he argued, and "under no condition we will accept the jurisdiction of the court on the subject. We cannot put ourselves in the dangerous situation that might arise out of the court's decision." The verdict was to be announced later, and Mosaddegh returned to Tehran having won the respect of the judges.

Back in Iran, economic and security conditions were deteriorating rapidly, worsened by increasing subversive activities of foreign powers and their agents. In a July 1952 meeting with the young monarch Mohammad Reza Shah, who headed the military, Mosaddegh requested control of the armed forces but was refused. In response, Mosaddegh immediately submitted his resignation as prime minister. The following day, the Shah, at the behest of the British and American governments, appointed Ahmad Ghavam as prime minister. Ghavam took a hard line, further angering the people who had come out in the streets in support of Mosaddegh. In the largest street protest on July 20, 1952, security forces clashed violently with the demonstrators, resulting in hundreds of casualties. The Shah, witnessing the depth of the people's support for Mosaddegh, became highly alarmed and changed

course. He appointed Mosaddegh to the dual role of prime minister and minister of defense, as permitted by the constitution. On the same day the International Court at The Hague voted in favor of Iran, holding that it had no jurisdiction in the oil dispute case. This was soon followed by the UN Security Council rejection of the British complaint against Iran.

Mosaddegh was at the height of his power and popularity, hailed as a hero not only in Iran, but in the greater Muslim East. As leader of Iran, Mosaddegh sponsored laws for a “clean government” and independent court systems, defended freedom of religion and political affiliations, and promoted free elections. He implemented many social reforms and fought for the rights of women, workers, and peasants. A fund was created to pay for rural development projects and to give assistance to farmers. According to his policy of negative equilibrium, an idea that helped the formation of the non-allied nations, Mosaddegh also refused to grant an oil concession to the Soviet Union. Most importantly, Mosaddegh helped to foster a national self-sufficiency campaign: balancing the budget, increasing non-oil production and creating a trade balance. His policies were frequently opposed by the Shah, army generals, leading clerics, land owners, the Tudeh (Communist) Party, and the governments of Britain and America.

Meanwhile, the British continued to undermine Mosaddegh’s authority by inciting division in the country, tightening the worldwide embargo on the purchase of Iranian oil and freezing Iranian assets. When all attempts failed, Britain concluded that “Mosaddegh must go” by any means necessary. Working jointly with the American CIA, they plotted a coup to overthrow his elected government. On August 15, 1953, with participation of the Shah and their Iranian collaborators, a CIA drafted plan codenamed Operation Ajax, headed by Kermit Roosevelt, Jr., went into action, but it failed to dislodge Mosaddegh from power.

In the second attempt on August 19, 1953, the violent overthrow of the government was accomplished. Mosaddegh escaped capture, but his home was invaded, looted, and burned. The following day Mosaddegh surrendered to “authorities” and was imprisoned. During this bloody episode, many hundreds were killed or wounded. Mosaddegh’s supporters were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, or even murdered. Mosaddegh’s foreign minister, Dr. Hossein Fatemi went into hiding but was captured a few months later; he was beaten, stabbed and, after a show trial, executed by a firing squad. The reign of terror had begun.

Tried as a traitor in a military court, on December 19, 1953, Prime Minister Mosaddegh pronounced,

Yes, my sin — my greater sin — and even my greatest sin is that I nationalized Iran’s oil industry and discarded the system of political and economic exploitation by the world’s greatest empire... This at

the cost to myself, my family; and at the risk of losing my life, my honor and my property... With God's blessing and the will of the people, I fought this savage and dreadful system of international espionage and colonialism... I am well aware that my fate must serve as an example in the future throughout the Middle East in breaking the chains of slavery and servitude to colonial interests.

Mosaddegh was convicted of treason. He was placed in solitary confinement for three years followed by house arrest for the remainder of his life in his ancestral village of Ahmadabad (source: <http://www.mohammadmosaddegh.com/biography/>).

334 **Fidel Castro** (1926–2016) – Cuban leader who established the first communist state in the Western hemisphere after leading an overthrow of the military dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He ruled over Cuba for nearly five decades, until handing off power to his younger brother Raúl in 2008. During that time, Castro's government was successful in reducing illiteracy, stamping out racism, and improving public healthcare, but was widely criticized in the Western press for stifling economic and political freedoms, much of which were the result of decades of US sanctions. Castro's Cuba also had a highly antagonistic relationship with the United States — most notably resulting in the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The two nations officially normalized relations in July 2015, ending a trade embargo that had been in place since 1960, when US-owned businesses in Cuba were nationalized without compensation.



Born in Birán, a small town in eastern Cuba, to a wealthy Spanish sugarcane farmer, who first came to the island during the Cuban War of Independence (1895–1898), and a domestic servant for his father's family, who bore him out of wedlock, he attended a couple of Jesuit schools. Later, he enrolled as a law student at the University of Havana, where he became interested in politics, joining the anti-corruption Orthodox Party and participating in an aborted coup attempt against the brutal Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Trujillo. In 1950, Castro graduated from the University of Havana and opened a law office. Two years later, he ran for election to the Cuban House of Representatives, but the election never happened as Batista seized power that March.

In 1953, Castro led about 120 men in an attack on the Moncada army barracks in Santiago de Cuba. The assault failed, Castro was captured and sentenced to 15 years in prison, and many of his men were killed. Upon his release in 1955 as part of a general amnesty, Castro traveled to Mexico, where he met fellow revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara and plotted his

return. The following year, Castro and 81 men sailed on the yacht “Granma” to the eastern coast of Cuba, where government forces immediately ambushed them. The estimated 18 survivors, including Castro, his brother Raúl and Guevara, fled deep into the Sierra Maestra Mountains in south-eastern Cuba with virtually no weapons or supplies.

But by early-1957 they were already attracting recruits and winning small battles against Batista’s rural forces. In 1958, Batista tried to snuff out the uprising with a massive offensive, complete with air force bombers and naval offshore units. The guerrillas held their ground, launched a counterattack and wrested control from Batista on January 1, 1959. After Castro arrived in Havana a week later and soon took over as prime minister, revolutionary tribunals began trying and executing members of the old regime for war crimes.

In 1960, Castro nationalized all US-owned businesses, including oil refineries, factories, and casinos. This prompted the United States to end diplomatic relations and impose a trade embargo that still stands. Meanwhile, in April 1961, about 1,400 Cuban exiles trained and funded by the CIA landed near the Bay of Pigs with the intent of overthrowing Castro. Their plans ended in disaster, however, partially because a first wave of bombers missed their targets and a second air strike was called off. Ultimately, more than 100 exiles were killed and nearly everyone else was captured. In December 1962, Castro freed them in exchange for medical supplies and baby food worth about \$52 million.

Castro publicly declared himself a Marxist-Leninist in late-1961. By that time, Cuba was becoming increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union for economic and military support. In October 1962, the United States discovered that nuclear missiles had been stationed there, just 90 miles from Florida, setting off fears of WWII. After a 13-day standoff, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed to remove the nukes against the wishes of Castro, who was left out of the negotiations. In return, US President John F. Kennedy publicly consented not to reinvade Cuba and privately consented to take American nuclear weapons out of Turkey (source: <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/fidel-castro>).

335 Michael Kidron and Ronald Segal, *The New State of the World Atlas, 4th edition*. (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1991), pp. 124–29.

336–354 Ibid.

355 Some call him al-Khidr.

- 356 The information that Aaron died first and was buried by Moses (ﷺ) at Mt. Hur, and that Moses died at Mt. Nabu and was buried in a red mound cannot be conclusively verified by Islamic sources.
- 357 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān, Volume 3*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 1348.
- 358 Ibid.
- 359 Jack C. Plano and Milton Greenberg, *The American Political Dictionary, Eighth Edition*. (Fort Worth, Texas, USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1990), pp. 278–80.

**Hague v. CIO** (1939) – an ordinance of Jersey City, New Jersey, that required permission to hold a meeting in or upon public streets, parks, or buildings was declared unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment. Under the ordinance, the officials of Jersey City had molested union organizers of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) and had denied them permission to hold meetings or to circulate handbills.

This case established that the right to assemble applies not merely to private meetings of groups but to public meetings in public places. The Supreme Court has, in other cases, frowned upon any prior restraints by government upon public meetings unless some reasonable standards are established for the granting of permits to meet. These standards must in some way be related to the health, safety, and welfare of the people. For example, one might legally be required to secure a permit in order to hold a parade (*Cox v. New Hampshire*, 1941), and the government is not obliged to permit use of all public property, such as courthouses and jails, for demonstrations of protest (*Adderly v. Florida*, 1966). A law barring demonstrations on the sidewalks around the Supreme Court building in Washington was struck down by the Court in *United States v. Grace* (1983) as was a law prohibiting the display of hostile signs within 500 ft of a foreign embassy (*Boos v. Barry*, 1988). But a ban on sleeping in tents erected in a park across from the White House as a form of protest was upheld in *Clark v. Community for Creative Non-Violence*, (1984).

- 360 Jack C. Plano, *The American Political Dictionary*, pp. 278–80.

361–366 Ibid.

- 367 Washington Post editorial staff, *New Rules*. (Washington, DC: The Washington Post, News (A) section, September 14, 2001).  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2001/09/14/new-rules/08f00e3e-2ce4-48cc-841e-118bb1f3c919/?utm\\_term=.f3cc1dfad16c](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2001/09/14/new-rules/08f00e3e-2ce4-48cc-841e-118bb1f3c919/?utm_term=.f3cc1dfad16c)

- 368 Michael Ratner, *Moving Toward a Police State (or Have We Arrived)?* (Montreal, Canada: Center for Research on Globalization, globalresearch.ca website, November 30, 2001).  
<https://www.globalresearch.ca/moving-toward-a-police-state-or-have-we-arrived/5624209>
- 369 Francis A. Boyle with Dennis Bernstein (interviewer), *Bush's Constitutional Coup: Kangaroo Courts and Disappearances*. (Berkeley, California, USA: *Flashpoints* on KPFA Radio 94.1 FM, November 14, 2001).
- 370 Ibid.
- 371 Christopher Bollyn, *In the Name of Security, Thousands Denied Constitutional Rights*. (Upper Marlboro, Maryland, USA: American Free Press, November 29, 2001).
- 372 Walter Pincus, *Silence of 4 Terror Probe Suspects Poses Dilemma for FBI*. (Washington, DC: The Washington Post, News (A) section, October 21, 2001).  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/10/21/silence-of-4-terror-probe-suspects-poses-dilemma-for-fbi/951c04bc-d51b-4574-ba34-3735f0570719/?utm\\_term=.263b9ccae06f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2001/10/21/silence-of-4-terror-probe-suspects-poses-dilemma-for-fbi/951c04bc-d51b-4574-ba34-3735f0570719/?utm_term=.263b9ccae06f)
- 373 PCJ briefing, *Proposed U.S. Torture Policy?* (Washington, DC: Partners for Civil Justice, January 2002).
- 374 Francis A. Boyle, *Bush's Constitutional Coup*.
- 375 Ibid.
- 376 Kevin Bankston, *EFF Analysis Of The Provisions Of The USA PATRIOT Act*. (San Francisco, California, USA: Electronic Frontier Foundation website, 31 October 27, 2003).  
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2003/10/eff-analysis-provisions-usa-patriot-act>
- 377 Ibid.
- 378 Dennis Kucinich, *A Prayer for America*. (New York, New York: The Nation website, February 26, 2002).  
<https://www.thenation.com/article/prayer-america/>

- 379 Henry A. Waxman and Janice D. Schakowsky in a letter to the President, *Reps. Waxman and Schakowsky Call on President Bush to Rescind His Executive Order that Greatly Restricts Public Access to Presidential Records*. (Washington, DC: November 6, 2001).  
<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/news/20011128/waxman.pdf>
- 380 Sarah Left, *Bush blocks public access to White House papers*. (London, United Kingdom: The Guardian website, November 2, 2001).  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/nov/02/usa.sarahleft>
- 381 Glen Johnson, *Bush Halts Inquiry of FBI and Stirs Up Firestorm*. (Boston, Massachusetts, USA: The Boston Globe newspaper, December 14, 2001).
- 382 Ruth Rosen, *The Day Ashcroft Censored Freedom of Information*. (San Francisco, California, USA: San Francisco Chronicle website, January 6, 2002).  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/EDITORIALS-On-the-Public-s-Right-to-Know-The-2885970.phpm>
- 383 Ibid.
- 384 Walden Bello, *The American Way of War*. (Montreal, Canada: Center for Research on Globalization, globalresearch.ca website, January 6, 2002).  
<https://archives.globalresearch.ca/articles/BEL201A.html>
- 385 Charles Krauthamer, *The Bush Doctrine*. (New York, New York: The Time Vault website, March 5, 2001).  
<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,999353,00.html>
- 386 Lance Morrow, *The Case for Rage and Retribution*. (New York, New York: The Time Vault website, September 12, 2001).  
<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,174641,00.html>
- 387 William Pfaff, *Will the New World Order Rest Solely on American Might?* (New York, New York: International Herald Tribune newspaper, December 29, 2001).
- 388 Narrated by 'Adi ibn Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī and recorded by al-Tirmidhī.  
وفي رواية أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ تَفْسِيرًا لِهَذِهِ الْآيَةِ أَمَا إِنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَعْبُدُونَهُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا أَحْلُوا لَهُمْ شَيْئًا اسْتَحْلَوْهُ . وَإِذَا حَرَّمُوا عَلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا حَرَّمُوهُ . وَذَلِكَ عِبَادَتُهُمْ إِيَّاهُمْ.

- 389 David Crystal (editor), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia, Second Edition*. (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 262.
- 390 *Ibid.*, p. 724.
- 391 Dr. James McKay (general editor), *World Facts, Revised and Updated*. (Bath, United Kingdom: Parragon Publishing, 1999), p. 108.
- 392 *Ibid.*
- 393 *Ibid.*, pp. 106–07.
- 394 Within the compendium of Islamic *tafsir* literature there are some details about this event that appear to be drawn from Judeo-Christian literature. A rough approximation of what is found in Judeo-Christian accounts is provided below so that the analytical Muslim reader will be able to filter out this kind of hearsay from “Islamic” historical accounts that are not based on the reliable and authentic information in the meticulous Qur’an.
- Judeo-Christian perceptions about the plagues of Egypt suggest they are a sequence of natural disasters victimizing Egypt prior to the Israelites’ release from Pharaoh’s servitude (Exodus, 7:8–11:10). Various labels as *plagues* (Exodus, 9:14), *signs* (Exodus, 10:1–2), and *wonders* (Exodus, 7:3), they jointly constitute God’s “great acts of judgement” (Exodus, 7:4) against Egypt. The ten plagues episodes from the Book of Exodus are as follows: (1) the waters of the Nile turned to blood (7:14–25, following 7:8–13, a preface); (2) infestation of frogs (8:1–15); (3) lice (or gnats) affecting man and beast (8:16–19); (4) flies (8:20–32; probably the tsetse fly, according to the Jewish interpretation, ravaging wild beasts); (5) murrain affecting the cattle (9:1–7); (6) boils (9:8–12); (7) heavy hail (9:13–35); (8) locusts devouring the crops (10:1–20); (9) three days of darkness (10:21–23); and (10) death of the “first-born” of man and beast (11:1–10). Seven plagues were brought on by Moses or Aaron (ﷺ) raising his staff and three were sent directly by God. The episode features prominently in the Jewish Seder service.
- These stylized plague episodes claim a historical nucleus. Interpreters have often introduced various natural Egyptian phenomena into the discussion, and sometimes argued for a causal relationship whereby one scourge triggers another. Tiny organisms tend to give the Nile a dull reddish hue when it crests in August. Scourges of frogs have been attested in September. An abundance of dead frogs might readily attract gnats and flies, subsequently inflicting disease upon cattle and humanity. Egyptian hailstorms, while infrequent, are known, as are locusts and severe sandstorms capable of darkening the skies. All plagues, save the death of the firstborn, can be said to make sense within an Egyptian setting.



Such rationalizations, as they are encountered in the secular West, however, ignore the wonder surging through these episodes. Natural law held no fascination for biblical Israel. Rather, with eyes of faith, Yahweh's people emphasized the reality of unnatural happenings providentially executed on their behalf. Their immunity from those plagues that devastated their Egyptian neighbors was not perceived as fortuitous. Nor was the hardening of Pharaoh's heart understood as anything but the outcome of Yahweh's own determination to manifest impressive "wonders" for Yahweh's own glory.

In sum, the plague episodes in the Book of Exodus (7:8–11:10) fit comfortably within the entirety of Exodus, chapters 1–15 — chapters perceptively grasped by some as culturally-shaped Passover legend celebrating Yahweh's special intervention for the rescue of Yahweh's people. Nature was thus subjected to divine purpose as Yahweh claimed Israel in a most memorable manner.

395 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān*, Volume 3, p. 1364.

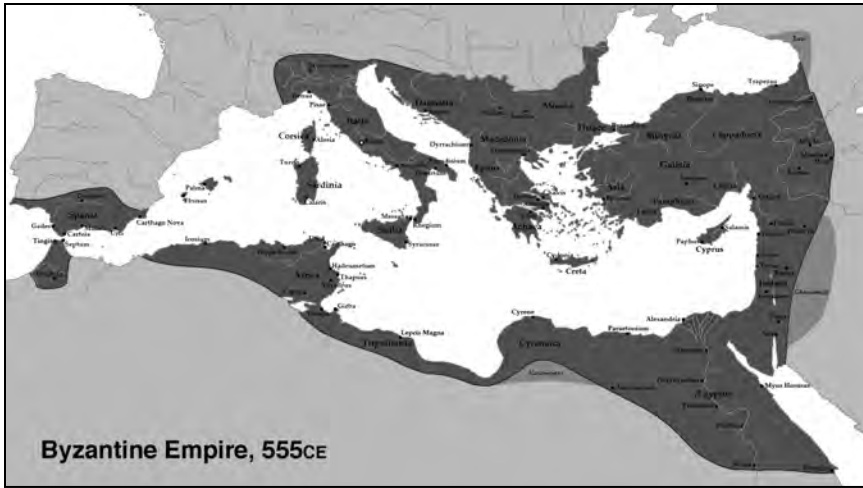
396 **Byzantine Empire** (circa 330–1453) – the eastern half of the Roman Empire, centered upon Constantinople, formerly Byzantium (refer to graphic on following page). Founded in 324CE by Constantine the Great as the New Rome, and formally inaugurated in 330CE, Constantinople, with its Senate and tractionally named magistracies (for example, consuls, pretors), its 14 regions, and its state corn dole, was directly modeled on old imperial Rome. But in two respects it was always different: it was a Christian, not a pagan city, and its culture was predominantly Greek, not Latin. Though initially subordinate to the Old Rome, in due course it outstripped it in importance, becoming both the capital of an independent state and a major center of learning, law, and culture. The two most comprehensive codifications of Roman Law — Justinian's Code and the Theodosian Code — were carried out here, the former under Byzantium's greatest ruler, Justinian (527–565CE). A bastion against "barbarian" hordes, Byzantium for centuries fought off encroaching Goths, Huns, and others. In 1453, the empire finally succumbed to the Ottoman Turks, having survived old imperial Rome by nearly a thousand years.

397 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān*, Volume 3, p. 1364.

398 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 343–44.

399 Ibid.

400 Ibid.



401 Ibid.

**stela** – an upright stone slab or column typically bearing a commemorative inscription or relief design, often serving as a gravestone.

402 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 454–55.

403 Ibid.

404 It is also said that after Mūsá (ﷺ) fasted 30 days, he felt repelled by the odor of his mouth (the fasting period corresponded to the month of Dhū al-Qa'dah). He then used a *miswāk* (a particular twig that cleanses the mouth and teeth) to freshen his mouth. Then he was instructed to fast the following 10 days of Dhū al-Hijjah so that when he meets with the Almighty he does so while fasting.

405 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 1038–39.

**Decalogue** – the Ten Commandments that, according to the Old Testament, were delivered by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai, stated in the Books of Exodus (20:1–17) and Deuteronomy (5:6–21). The Decalogue is recognized as the basis of morality by Jews and Christians.

406 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 1038–39.

407–411 Ibid.

412 Ibid.

**Kiriath-Jearim** – ancient Palestinian town in the territory of Benjamin (Joshua, 15:60). Before the ancient Israeli conquest, it was a Hivite settlement and a center of Baal worship. During the conquest of Canaan, Kiriath-Jearim, with its allies the Gibeonites, succeeded in concluding a treaty with Joshua. The Ark was kept there for 20 years before David (ﷺ) took it to Jerusalem. A youth village is now situated on the site, 10 miles west of Jerusalem.

413 Patrick J. Buchanan, *A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America's Destiny*. (Washington, DC, USA: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1999), pp. 159–60.

414–418 Ibid.

419 More detail regarding the involvement of this Samaritan will be presented in *Sūrah ṬāHa*.

420 David Icke, *...And the Truth Shall Set You Free*. (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Bridge of Love Publications, 1995), pp. 283–86.

421–427 Ibid.

428 Ibid., pp. 165–71

429–435 Ibid.

436 Ibid.

**Conrad Black** was convicted of fraud and sentenced to seven years in prison in Chicago in 2007. He is married to Barbara Amiel, another Zionist mouthpiece. After serving 42 months, Black was released and sent to Canada. He is barred from entry into the US for 30 years although he is trying to suck up to current US President Donald Trump for a pardon. He was knighted by the British government but before that he was forced to give up his Canadian citizenship. The Hollinger Group has folded after fraud cases. Black also had to give up ownership of other papers.



437 David Icke, *...And the Truth Shall Set You Free*, pp. 165–71.

438–440 Ibid.

441 Ibid.

John Smith attended the April 1986 Bilderberg meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland, which was chaired by Lord Roll of Ipsden. Also there were David Steel, then leader of the British Liberal Party; Denis Healey; Lord Home; Garret Fitzgerald, the Irish Prime Minister; Lord Young, the UK Secretary of State for Employment; Malcolm Rifkind, the Secretary of State of Scotland and later Defense and Foreign Secretary; Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor of Germany (Helmut Kohl, the previous Chancellor is also a Bilderberger); Lord Boardman, Chairman of the National Westminster Bank; Henry J. Heinz II, Chairman of Heinz and Co; Paul R. Jolles, Chairman of Nestle S.A.; John Sainsbury, Chairman of J. Sainsbury plc; Conrad Black; Andrew Knight; and Paul A. Volcker, the previous chairman of the US Federal Reserve, also an executive of the CFR and the Trilateral Commission.

442 David Icke, ...*And the Truth Shall Set You Free*, pp. 165–71.

443 Ibid.

444 Ibid.

445 Ibid. pp. 196–97.

446–449 Ibid.

450 Ibid., pp. 286–87.

451 Ibid.

452 Ibid., pp. 154–57.

453–461 Ibid.

462 Ibid., pp. 195–96.

463 Ibid.

464 Ibid.

465 Ibid., pp. 197–203.

466 Ibid.

467 Ibid.

468 Ibid.

After 1986, such dire penalties ceased to be spoken by the initiate during the ceremonies and are instead spoken by the Worshipful Master. What difference that is supposed to make is anyone's guess, but a Master's experience.

469 David Icke, ...*And the Truth Shall Set You Free*, pp. 197–203.

470–476 Ibid.

477 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa-al-Shari'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 9. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'ashir, 1411AH), p. 110 (originally attributed to 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās).

478 Ibid., p. 113

479 Dr. Issa Nakhleh, *The Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem, Volume 1*. (New York, New York: Intercontinental Books, 1991), pp. 65–250.

480 **David Ben-Gurion** (1886–1973) – Israeli politician and prime minister, (1948–1953, 1955–1963). Born David Grün (Green) in Plonsk, Poland, Ben-Gurion, the son of a lawyer, went to Warsaw University in 1904. There he joined the Poale Zion and two years later left for Palestine, where he became a farmhand. He was a co-founder of the Poale Zion journal, *HaAhdut* (*The Unity*). In 1912, Ben-Gurion enrolled at the University of Istanbul to study Turkish law and government. The outbreak of WWI took him back to Palestine. In 1915, he was deported as a troublemaker and sailed for New York. There he joined an American battalion of the Jewish Legion, which was being formed as part of the British army. Trained in Canada, Ben-Gurion arrived in Egypt as a member of the 40th Royal Fusiliers.



In post-WWI Palestine the Poale Zion split, its leftist section leaving in 1919 and forming Mopsi (Mifleget Poalim Sozialistim, Socialist Workers Party). Its rightist, nationalist section — led among others by Ben-Gurion — combined with the followers of Berle Katznelson to form Ahdut HaAvodah. Soon Ahdut HaAvodah and HaPoale HaTzair took the lead in constituting an umbrella organization to encompass all labor-pioneer parties of Zionist persuasion: Histadrut. With successive elections to Histadrut confer-

ences showing Ahdut HaAvodah and HaPoale HaTzair to be the main parties, pressure grew on their leaders to seek a merger. This led to the founding of Mapai in January 1930 under the stewardship of Chaim Arlosoroff. Following the murder of Arlosoroff in 1933, Ben-Gurion was elected head of Mapai. Two years later he became leader of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, soon to be recognized by the British mandate as the official representative of the Jews in Palestine.

Differing with his colleagues in the Mapai leadership, Ben-Gurion favored the 1937 Peel Commission's partition proposal. He opposed the British White Paper of 1939, which limited Jewish immigration into Palestine to an annual average of 15,000 for the next five years. But he could not remain anti-British once WWII had erupted in September 1939. He encouraged fellow Jews to join the British Africa Corps.

In 1942, he was the main instigator behind the resolution of the American Zionist Organization that the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine should be the prime objective of Zionism. After the war, backed by Jewish Agency funds, Ben-Gurion, in his role of Histadrut chief, began to purchase arms in Europe. His appointment as head of the Zionist Organization's defense department in December 1946 enabled him to bring the various Jewish armed organizations in Palestine under a single command. Early in 1947, noticing the convergence of US and Soviet positions on the partitioning of Palestine, the National Council (Vaad Leumi) of the Yishuv, led by Ben-Gurion, began to formulate plans to consolidate the Jewish sector in Palestine, militarily and otherwise. By the time the United Nations adopted the partition plan in November 1947 the Yishuv had a large professional army, supported by 79,000 reserves, armed police, and home guards.

By spring 1948, at the behest of Ben-Gurion, the Jewish Agency had transferred all its executive powers to the people's administrative committee of the Yishuv assembly's National Council. It was this committee of 13, headed by Ben-Gurion and functioning as the provisional government, that declared the founding of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948 in Tel Aviv. Twelve days later, it established the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) consisting of 60,000 troops, with Ben-Gurion as defense minister. The IDF performed well in the First Arabian-Israeli War, also known as the War of Independence (of Israel), which lasted from mid-May 1948 to early-January 1949, when armistice agreements were signed between Israel and its four Arab adversaries on the Greek island of Rhodes.

Mapai emerged as the largest party in the January 1949 election, winning 46 of the 120 seats in the Knesset, and Ben-Gurion became prime minister. He welcomed the Tripartite (Anglo-American-French) Declaration of May 1950, which opposed any attempt to change the armistice boundaries of Israel set in January 1949, and promised to supply arms to Arabs and Israelis only to the extent that they did not create an "imbalance." The

United Religious Front's disagreement with Ben-Gurion on the degree of governmental control over religious education in schools caused the downfall of his government in mid-1951. In the Second Knesset, Mapai won 45 seats. Having played a leading role in shaping the basic outline of Israel's internal and external policies, Ben-Gurion resigned as prime minister in December 1953 and retired to his kibbutz in the Negev.

Moshe Sharett became the next premier. His defense minister, **Pinchas Lavon**, authorized a sabotage campaign in Egypt, but it backfired and Lavon resigned. Ben-Gurion was brought into the cabinet in early-1955 as defense minister. In response to the execution of two ringleaders of the Jewish espionage-sabotage cell in Egypt, Ben-Gurion ordered a massive attack on an Egyptian military camp in Ghazzah, which resulted in 39 Egyptian deaths. The escalating tension resulted in Ben-Gurion becoming prime minister in late-1955. Within a year he was involved in invading and occupying the Sinai Peninsula in collusion with Britain and France in the Suez War. Under pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union, he withdrew Israeli troops from the Sinai in March 1957.



His next coalition government, formed after elections in November 1959, proved unstable, with the old controversy about Lavon's "security mishap" resurfacing in 1960. When a cabinet committee exonerated Lavon in early-1961 Ben-Gurion threatened to resign as prime minister and defense minister, insisting on a judicial inquiry. As a compromise, and in exchange for the shelving of further investigation into the affair, Lavon stepped down as secretary-general of Histadrut. Ben-Gurion headed the coalition government formed after the August 1961 poll, but found that he lacked the kind of authority he had exercised before. He resigned from the government in 1963 and began campaigning against his successor, Levi Eshkol.

Aware of the declining popularity of Mapai, its leadership recommended an alignment (*maarach*) between it and Ahdut HaAvodah-Poale Zion. This was ratified by the Mapai convention in February 1965. Disagreeing with this, Ben-Gurion and his followers left Mapai and offered their own list, Rafi, in the November 1965 election. Rafi won 10 seats while the Mapai-Ahdut HaAvodah-Poale Zion Maarach won 45. Ben-Gurion's personal popularity proved unequal to the institutional strength of his former party. After the June 1967 Six Day War, Ben-Gurion opposed the annexation of the colonized Palestinian territories. In 1968 the *maarach* was widened to include Rafi, leading to the merger of the three constituents into the Israeli Labor Party. Ben-Gurion founded a new group, LaAam (To the People), which won four seats in the 1969 poll. The following year he quit politics. He died in 1973, leaving behind many diaries that have since been published. Refer also to **Endnote 48** in Volume 1.

**Menachem Wolfovitch Begin** (1913–1992) – Israeli terrorist who became “legitimate” as a politician and prime minister (1977–1983). Born in Brest-Litovsk (then in Poland, later in Russia), Begin obtained a law degree at the University of Warsaw. At 16, he joined the Zionist youth organization with its revisionist mentality, Betar. More extremist than Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist movement, Begin challenged him in 1938 after being appointed commander of Betar in Poland. On the eve of the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, Begin fled to Vilnius, Lithuania, then under Soviet occupation. In 1940 he was sentenced to eight years’ hard labor in a Siberian camp. But after the Soviet Union had joined WWII in mid-1941, Begin was released and drafted into the Free Polish army. He arrived in Palestine in 1942 as a soldier of that force.



After his demobilization in 1943, he was appointed commander of the underground Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization). Begin declared an armed struggle against the British mandate in January 1944, a call he repeated in October 1945 after the end of WWII. The Irgun’s terrorist activities led the British to offer 10,000 pounds sterling for his arrest. In July 1946, the Irgun bombed the British mandate government offices in the King David Hotel, Jerusalem, killing 91 British, Arab, and Jewish officials and staff. Following this, the Haganah, the main military forces of the Jewish community in Palestine, stopped cooperating with the Irgun.

Begin was one of the chief planners of the attack on the Arab village of Dayr Yāsīn near Jerusalem on April 10, 1948, resulting in the massacre of 254 men, women, and children — an event that caused the intended exodus of Arabs from Palestine. Led by Begin, the Irgun ranks refused to be absorbed into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) formed by the provisional government of David Ben-Gurion on May 26, 1948. They participated in the war against the Arab states as a separate entity. This continued until late-June, when Ben-Gurion, clashing with Begin on the question of delivery of arms and volunteers to the Irgun aboard a freighter anchored off Tel Aviv, ordered his forces to destroy the ship. In September Begin disbanded the Irgun, but soon former Irgun and Revisionist Zionist ranks reemerged as the Herut party under Begin’s leadership.

In 1949 Begin was elected to the Knesset and remained a member until 1984 — his membership interrupted by a 15-month suspension in January 1952 for inciting a mob to attack the Knesset in protest against reparations to Israel from West Germany. In the first five general elections, his Herut party won about 12% of the votes, emerging as the largest opposition faction in the parliament. He led his group in an authoritarian way and brooked no



challenge. In 1965, at his behest, Herut joined with the Liberal Party to form the Gahal bloc, which won 21% of the seats in that year's general election. On the eve of the June 1967 Six Day War, Begin joined the national unity government headed by Levi Eshkol. He stayed in the cabinet until July 1970 when — protesting against the majority decision to accept a US peace plan that envisaged Israel's withdrawal from Sinai — he resigned and resumed his opposition role. In 1973 when the Likud bloc, containing all the right-wing parties, was formed, Begin was elected its leader. Following Likud's electoral success in May 1977, Begin became prime minister, a position he held for more than six years. He signed the Camp David Accords with Egyptian President Muḥammad Anwar al-Sādāt in September 1978, which in turn led to the conclusion of a “peace treaty” between Israel and Egypt. That year he and al-Sādāt won the Nobel Peace Prize.

He twice ordered the invasion and occupation of Lebanon: in March 1978 and June 1982. The first occupation, limited to southern Lebanon, ended shortly. But the second invasion, when the Israelis advanced as far as Beirut and began to dictate the politics of Lebanon, proved controversial. Growing public criticism and the Israeli death toll in Lebanon, combined with an annual inflation rate of 400%, led to Begin's resignation in August 1983. He had also been depressed by the death of his wife, Aliza, nine months earlier. See also **Endnote 45** in Volume 4, and Endnote 45 in Volume 1.

**Yitzhak Shamir** (1915–2012) – Israeli terrorist-cum-politician and prime minister (1986–1992). Born Yitzhak Yezernitsky to a religious family in Poland, Shamir joined the Revisionist Zionist youth movement, Betar. He moved to Palestine in 1935 and two years later joined Irgun Zvai Leumi. When Irgun split in 1940, with Avraham Stern forming Lehi, Shamir opted for the new group. After Stern was killed in 1942, Shamir became one



of the three commanders of Lehi in charge of organization and operations, which included the assassination in 1944 of Lord Moyne, the British resident minister in the Muslim East. Arrested by the British in 1946, Shamir was dispatched to a detention camp in Eritrea (graphic shows a Wanted Poster of the Palestine Police Force offering rewards for the capture of Stern Gang terrorists, Yaakov Levstein, left, Yitzhak Yazernitsky (Shamir), center, and Natan Friedman-Yelin). He escaped after four months and found his way to Paris, where he lived until the imposition of Israel on the Palestinians in May 1948.

After his arrival in Israel, Shamir became active with the political wing of Lehi, the Fighters Party. He joined Mossad in 1955 and served in various

senior positions until 1965. After running a mattress factory for five years, he re-entered politics by joining the Herut party. Three years later he became chairman of the Herut executive, and in the December 1973 election he won a seat in the Knesset. He served as speaker from 1977–1980 but opposed the Camp David Accords, negotiated by the leader of his Likud party, Menachem Begin. In the Knesset vote on the accords, he abstained. Shamir became foreign minister in 1980.

Following Begin's retirement in 1983, Shamir won the contest for party leadership and became premier, while retaining the foreign affairs portfolio. He inherited a military imbroglio in Lebanon, hyperinflation, and the collapse of several banks. After the stalemate result of the 1984 election, Shamir reached a rotation accord with Labor leader Shimon Peres in a national unity government. He served as deputy premier and foreign minister until 1986 and then became prime minister. After the 1988 poll Shamir continued as premier with his own coalition, first with Labor and then, from March 1990, with right-wing parties only.

In October 1991, he participated in the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid, while insisting on expanding Jewish colonial outposts in the Colonized Palestinian Territories. The bilateral talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors made no progress, as Shamir, having lost the June 1992 election, revealed that he had planned to drag out the talks for 10 years. In 1993, he stepped down as Likud leader. He was re-elected to the Knesset in 1996 and 1999.

**Ariel Sharon** (1928–2014) – Israeli military officer, politician, and prime minister (2001–2006). Born Ariel Shinerman to a Zionist family in Kafr Malal, Palestine, Sharon joined Haganah as a youth. He fought in the Arab-Israeli War (1948–1949) and continued his military career, working as an intelligence officer. He established Unit 101, composed exclusively of volunteers, to carry out swift cross-border reprisal attacks — one such operation against an Egyptian military camp in Ghazzaḥ in February 1955 resulted in 38 Egyptian deaths. When Unit 101 was incorporated into the paratroopers in later years, Sharon became a paratroop commander.



During the Suez War in 1956, Sharon, leading a brigade, exceeded his orders and engaged in a battle that resulted in many victims. This slowed down his promotion. Only when Yitzhak Rabin became chief of staff in 1965 was Sharon promoted to head the training department of the general staff. Two years later he became a brigadier general. During the June 1967 Six-Day War, Sharon commanded a division on the southern front, capturing the Umm Katif range in the Sinai. In 1969, he was put in charge of the southern command. His iron-fist policy toward the Palestinian resistance to

the Israeli colonization of the West Bank and Ghazzah proved controversial at home.

In mid-1973, he quit the army and entered politics by joining Gahal. Sharon was instrumental in the creation of Likud out of the merger of Gahal, the Free Center, the State Party (a remnant of Rafi), and the Eretz Yisrael movement. In the October 1973 War, Sharon commanded a division that established a bridgehead over the Suez Canal. However, his later command of the division proved controversial. After being elected to the Knesset in December 1973, he resigned after some months to serve Labor Prime Minister Rabin as an adviser. In 1976 he formed his own group — Shlomzion (Peaceful Zion) — which won two seats in the 1977 election. He merged his group with the Herut faction of Likud and became minister of agriculture in the Likud-dominated government. He was also appointed chairman of the cabinet's (Jewish) settlement committee. Following the 1981 elections, he was named defense minister.

Once Israel had withdrawn its troops from the Sinai in April 1982, Sharon finalized his plans to attack Lebanon. Having launched the campaign with the ostensible aim of capturing a strip of Lebanese territory to rid it of Palestinian guerillas, Sharon expanded it into a full-fledged war, advancing to Beirut, besieging it for 63 days and bombarding it mercilessly from the land, air, and sea. Having secured the departure of Syrian and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) troops from Beirut, Sharon set out to become kingmaker in Lebanese politics by getting Bashīr al-Jimayyil elected president in September, 1982. He succeeded, only to see his protege assassinated before he could take office.

Sharon allowed his Maronite allies a free hand to murder some 2,000 Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabrā and Shātīlā. A demonstration by about 400,000 Israelis compelled the government to appoint a commission of inquiry, headed by the chief supreme court judge, Yitzhak Kahan. Following a critical report by this commission, Sharon was forced to resign as defense minister in February 1983, although he retained a place in the cabinet as a minister without a portfolio.

In the national unity government formed in September 1984, Prime Minister Shimon Peres appointed him minister of trade and industry and a member of the inner political cabinet. He held these jobs until January 1990. In the reconstituted cabinet led by Yitzhak Shamir in May 1990, Sharon became minister of housing and accelerated the building of Jewish colonies in the West Bank. After the Likud's defeat in the June 1992 election, Sharon lost his preeminence in Israeli politics. In 1996, Benjamin Netanyahu put Sharon in charge of a newly created Ministry of Infrastructure, elevating him to minister of foreign affairs in October 1998. Following Netanyahu's defeat in the prime ministerial contest in 1999 and his quitting of politics, Sharon was elected leader of the Likud.

Escorted by 1,000 armed police, Sharon “toured” al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf (the Noble Sanctuary) in al-Quds (Jerusalem) on September 28, 2000 — a move designed to underscore Israeli sovereignty over Islam’s third holiest site. The Palestinian demonstration that followed Ṣalāh al-Jumu‘ah at al-Masjid al-Aqṣá the next day was curbed by the Israeli security forces with live ammunition, which left seven protestors dead. This marked the start of Intifāḍah al-Aqṣá.

In the February 2001 prime ministerial contest, securing 62.4% of the vote, Sharon defeated the incumbent Ehud Barak by 25% on a platform of continued expansion of Jewish colonies in the West Bank, Israeli sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, and no talks with the Palestinians until there was complete cessation of terrorism. His national unity government included Labor, now led by Binyamin Ben-Elizier. Israeli violence against Palestinians escalated as the newly installed US administration of President George W. Bush (in office 2001–2009) pursued a hands-off policy.

Following the 9/11 attacks on the US, Sharon’s attempt to equate the Palestinian resistance to Israeli military occupation to terrorism failed. He responded to periodic Palestinian human-body explosive delivery devices (called suicide bombings by the mainstream media) with escalating Israeli terror, pursuing his strategic aim of destroying the security and administrative infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority with armed helicopters, fighter aircraft, and gunboats, and ordering assassinations of important Palestinian freedom fighters. Responding to a particularly lethal Palestinian body delivered explosive in Israel on March 27, 2002, Sharon ordered the reoccupation of all the towns under Palestinian Authority (except al-Khalīl/Hebron and Ariḥā/Jericho), thus effectively abrogating the Oslo Accords. His defiance of President Bush to vacate the colonized Palestinian towns was rewarded with an invitation to the White House and the sobriquet of “man of peace.” He put PA president Yāsir ‘Arafāt under house arrest in Rāmallāh. In the Knesset poll of January 2003, his Likud party improved its strength from 19 to 38. He formed a coalition government with strangely secularist Shinai and far-right secular parties.

Sharon was obese for much of his life and also had suspected chronic high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Stories of Sharon’s appetite and obesity were legendary in Israel. His staff car would reportedly be stocked with snacks, vodka, and caviar. He was a daily consumer of cigars and luxury foods. Ultimately, Sharon’s overindulgence — politically, militarily, and personally — caught up with him: he was hospitalized on December 18, 2005, after suffering a minor ischemic stroke. A few weeks later, after prematurely returning to work, he suffered a hemorrhagic stroke on January 4, 2006, and his doctors were unable to prevent him from entering into a coma, in which he was to remain until his death eight years later. Refer also to **Endnote 294** in Volume 7.

481 Dr. Issa Nakhleh, *The Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem*, Vol. 1, p. 269.

482 United Nations Security Council Official Records, Semiramis, 1948, Document S/740 says,

Haganah terrorists made a most barbarous attack at... the Semiramis Hotel, killing innocent people and wounding many. The Jewish Agency terrorist forces blasted the entrance and then placed bombs in the basement... the whole building collapsed with its residents.

483 Dr. Issa Nakhleh, *The Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem*, Vol. 1, pp. 271–72, 295–393.

They expelled 90% of the inhabitants of the colonized area by massacre and force. They destroyed 425 Arab towns and villages as well as 67 villages and localities of the Bedouin tribes (*The Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem*, Vol. 1, p. 332).

484 Menachem Begin, *The Revolt: Story of the Irgun*. (London, United Kingdom: W.H. Allen & Co., 1983), p. 164.

Israeli propaganda says Palestinians did not flee because of pressure from Israel. Rather, Arab leaders, fearing Palestinians would be caught in the crossfire between Jewish and invading Arab armies, encouraged them to find temporary shelter in Lebanon and Jordan. It says that, considering their lack of loyalty to their ancestral lands and property, as well as the newly created State of Israel, they are worthy of neither repatriation and repossession, nor reimbursement. Instead they should have been assimilated by wealthy Arab nations. The fact that millions remain in virtual concentration camps is the fault of the uncaring Arab world, not Israel. Israel also contends that after 1948 its hundreds of Jewish colonies were built, not on previous Arab villages, but on barren lands the Arabs had been too lazy to develop. Evangelicals accept these lies unquestioningly.

485 **Folke Bernadotte** (1895–1948) – a United Nations mediator, and chairman of the Swedish Red Cross. He was appointed on May 14, 1948, to “promote a peaceful adjustment” of the situation in Palestine between Arabs and Jews, and to stop the ongoing fighting between the two parties. His recommendations for peace angered Jews and Palestinians. He advocated the merger of the Arab part of Palestine with Jordan, the annexation of the Negev to this Arab state. He proposed that Western Galilee remain in



Israel's possession and that Arab refugees should be repatriated. On September 17, 1948, he was shot with six bullets, including one to the heart, by an Israeli terrorist group. He was replaced by Ralph Bunche, one of his principal assistants, as an acting mediator.

486 Zionist soldiers admitted,

[We] killed some eighty to one hundred Arabs, women and children. The children were killed by smashing their skulls with clubs. In the village there remained Arab men and women who were put in the houses without food. Then the sappers [a soldier responsible for tasks such as building and repairing roads and bridges, laying and clearing mines] came to blow up the houses.<sup>a</sup>

a David Gilmour, *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians*. (London, United Kingdom: Sphere Books, 1980), pp. 68–69.

487 General Van Binnike, testifying before the United Nations Security Council said,

Bullet-ridden bodies near the doorways and multiple bullet holes on the doors of the demolished houses indicated that the inhabitants had been forced to remain inside until their homes were blown up over them.<sup>a</sup>

a Dr. Issa Nakhleh, *The Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem, Vol. 1*, p. 274 (taken from the United Nations Security Council Official Records, Resolution, 1953, S/3139/Rev.2).

488 The Israeli daily *Kol HaAam* published on its front page the full story of the Kafr Qāsim massacre, "...the men of the Israeli Frontier Guard killed 47 Arab citizens in Kafr Qāsim. The killing was carried out in cold blood and for no reason." *Kol HaAam's* story is published in its entirety in *The Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem*, p. 278.

489 Dr. Issa Nakhleh, *The Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem, Vol. 1*, p. 282.

490 Ibid, p. 283.

491 **Robert Spencer** (1962–present) – director of the *Jihad Watch* blog, a project of the David Horowitz Freedom Center, and co-founder of Stop Islamization of America, he is one of America's most prolific and vociferous anti-Muslim propagandists. An incessant blogger, author, and activist, he insists, despite

his lack of academic training in Islam, that the religion is inherently violent and that extremists who commit acts of terror are simply following its most authentic version. His writing was cited dozens of times in a manifesto written by the Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik.

Spencer received bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees (religious studies) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has published 17 books (as of February 2018) focusing on radical Islam, three of which are *New York Times* best-sellers. Spencer has given seminars on Islam and jihad to the US Central Command, Army Command and General Staff College, the Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group, the FBI, the Joint Terrorism Task Force, and the US intelligence community. He also appears regularly on the *Fox News* network.



Self-taught in the study of Islam and its religious texts, Spencer has been widely criticized for a lack of scholarly credentials and espousing selective ultra-literal readings of scriptures. He considers these texts to be innately extremist and violent, and refuses to acknowledge nonviolent passages and centuries of adapted interpretations. According to Spencer, “traditional Islam itself is not moderate or peaceful. It is the only major world religion with a developed doctrine and tradition of warfare against unbelievers.”

In 2003, the David Horowitz Center launched *Jihad Watch*. Spencer spends most of his days aggregating and populating the blog with negative news stories involving Islam and Muslims. Seemingly the more violent the article the better, in which to serve Spencer's overarching goal of perpetuating a narrative of Islam as an inherently violent and threatening religion. He averages anywhere from five to 10 posts daily. Spencer is also active on the anti-Muslim speaking circuit. He spends a good amount of his time traveling the country to speak at the invitation of other anti-Muslim organizations as well as conservative and Tea Party groups. Conservative-leaning student groups often invite Spencer to speak on campus, which is usually accompanied by controversy. In 2015, he spoke alongside then-presidential candidate Ted Cruz at a New Hampshire event organized by the Young America's Foundation.

In July 2011, *Wired* reported that two of Spencer's controversial books were listed in FBI training materials. Both *The Truth about Muhammad* and *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam* were recommended for agents hoping to better understand Islam. Following the report, 57 Muslim, Arab, and South Asian civil rights and advocacy organizations sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security's John Brennan urging a task force be established to examine anti-Muslim biases within federal law enforcement training materials. Spencer and his works were later dropped from federal training programs, something he remains bitter about to this day.

Spencer argues that extremist paramilitary movements, like al-Qaeda and ISIS, which have been given the “Islamic” label, but which Western intelligence agencies had a major hand in creating, are the most authentic interpretation and practice of Islam, despite being actively rejected by the overwhelming majority of the world’s Muslims. He brushes this fact off by bombastically claiming the majority of Muslims, either do not understand their own holy book or are masking their extremism. He depicts particular incidences of extremism as normative and representative of the entire group. Critics have been quick to point out that Spencer’s argument highly agendizes Islamic texts so as to exempt them, hypocritically, from the benefit of interpretation granted to other religious texts, like the Bible.

Spencer is known to have associations with European racists and neo-fascists. However, he claims that his contact with them is merely incidental. On June 25, 2013, Spencer and Pamela Geller were banned from Britain after planning to attend a rally organized by the English Defence League, an anti-Muslim extremist group. Anders Behring Breivik, the Norwegian terrorist who slaughtered 77 people, mostly teenagers, in Oslo and the nearby island of Utoya on July 22, 2011, referenced Spencer’s writings dozens of times in his 1,500-page manifesto. Breivik believed that Islam was destroying Western civilization. In response to media reports about the connection, Spencer likened the situation to Charles Manson’s statements about drawing inspiration from the Beatles.

In recent years, Spencer has become a consultant for the Center for Security Policy (CSP), a hate group headed by anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist Frank Gaffney. Spencer produces a *Jihad Watch* video series that he claims is co-sponsored by CSP. He is also a regular guest on Gaffney’s *Secure Freedom Radio*. In one such video, Spencer claimed Christmas and other holidays celebrated in the West are now “under siege because there are large numbers of Muslims in the West. That is the sole and only reason. The responsibility lies with those who admitted them without regard for Islam’s doctrines of religious warfare and supremacism.”

In 2017, Spencer came out in favor of President Donald Trump’s attempted Muslim ban and suggested adding Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to the list of banned countries. He offered an oversimplified justification of the ban, writing, “some harmless people will be kept out, or some harmful people will be let in.” Spencer has long advocated curtailing Muslim immigration to the United States and other Western nations. In 2015, he and Pamela Geller, via their organization American Freedom Defense Initiative, released an 18-point plan for “preserving and defending free societies.” The plan, among other things, calls for “an immediate halt of immigration by Muslims into nations that do not currently have a Muslim majority population.” It also outright advocates “profiling of Muslims at airports” and the “surveillance” and “regular inspections” of *masjids* in America.



On top of writing at his blog *Jihad Watch*, a project of the David Horowitz Freedom Center, Spencer also writes columns for *FrontPage Magazine* and *PJ Media*. In one article at *FrontPage*, also a Horowitz project, Spencer claimed Trump's controversial Warsaw speech in July 2017 showed that unlike Obama, this president is "working very hard to ensure that Judeo-Christian civilization survives." The speech was also celebrated by neo-fascists and the event where it was delivered attracted factions of Poland's far-right in support of Trump's message. In Spencer's 2017 book *Confessions of an Islamophobe*, a memoir that among other things dives into the nuances of being an anti-Muslim hate monger, he reveals he has no plans of slowing down,

There are, in short, very good reasons to be an Islamophobe, that is, to be concerned about Islam for the devastation that it brings into the lives of human beings both Muslim and non-Muslim. It is not hatred and bigotry to be the right kind of Islamophobe; indeed, the only chance for the survival of free societies into the latter part of the twenty-first century may be if large numbers of people join me in becoming this kind of unrepentant Islamophobe (source: <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/robert-spencer>).

**Daniel Pipes** (1949–present) – director of Middle East Forum, founded in 1990, an anti-Muslim hate group. Pipes has an apparently respectable background as a professor at leading universities including Harvard University, where his father once taught, and the University of Chicago. But he largely left academia in 1986, telling an interviewer for *Harvard Magazine* that he had "the simple politics of a truck driver, not the complex ones of an academic." And that self-assessment does not seem off base. In 2010, Pipes attacked Fayṣal 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, who was trying to build an Islamic center in lower Manhattan, and his wife, calling them "unsavory Islamists" and saying "this initiative carries the unmistakable odor of Islamic triumphalism" and "should be barred from opening." In fact, al-Ra'ūf had conducted trainings for the FBI and the State Department after 9/11 and spent a career trying to improve relations between Muslims and the West.



In 2002, Pipes organized *Campus Watch*, a website widely accused of McCarthyism after publishing dossiers on college professors he deemed "hostile" to America, too critical of Israel, or too sympathetic to Islam and Muslims. Joel Beinin, a professor of Middle East History at Stanford University, wrote an essay entitled "The New American McCarthyism: Policing Thought about the Middle East," which criticized the website for making

false claims. Beinlin mentioned Campus Watch as part of a larger anti-intellectual campaign aimed at regulating discourse on the Middle East and equating criticism of Israel to radical Islam.

President George W. Bush was forced to bypass a Republican-controlled Senate confirmation process to place Pipes temporarily on the board of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). Pipes faced stiff opposition to his USIP nomination and would not have been confirmed if his nomination was subjected to a vote. Pipes only served an interim term.

In 2004, Pipes endorsed the internment of ethnic Japanese in American prison camps in World War II and held that up as a model for dealing with Muslims today. According to *Bloomberg Businessweek*, Pipes also was the original source of the much-ridiculed claim that there are hundreds of “no-go zones” in Europe where Shari’ah law prevails and where non-Muslims, including police, are afraid to go — a claim *Bloomberg* described as “totally false.” In 2013, after visiting Europe, Pipes took it all back, saying he “regret[ted] having called these areas no-go zones.”

Pipes’ Middle East Forum is a major funder of American and European Muslim-bashers who share his Islamophobic paranoia. In a September 10, 2014 article in *The National Review*, Pipes reacted furiously to President Obama’s “preposterous claim” that ISIS was “not Islamic” in nature. Contrary to Obama’s “idiocy,” he said, the infamous terrorist organization is “100% Islamic... profoundly Islamic.”

Pipes criticized the “hypocrisy” of authorities who say they are not profiling Muslims, calling it “best to be honest and open about necessary preventive actions, however distasteful they may be” in a December 22, 2005 article. In an April 21, 2013 article, Pipes speculated that jihadist attackers might soon dress in the full-body coverings worn by ultra-few Muslim women and called for their banning. “One must expect future non-suicide bombers to turn to *niqābs* or *burqas*,” he wrote. “But why wait for them to engage in more murders? Why close the barn door only after the horse has run away? Far smarter would be to ban whole-body covers in public places now.” His evidence was the approximately two such crimes that happen each year in Philadelphia.

Pipes attacked *The 99*, a comic book with Muslim superheroes that was lauded by President Obama, in an April 17, 2012, article. “[T]o the Islamic indoctrination of Western children, already present in schools through textbooks... now add comic books and the many spin-offs,” he said. “*The 99* might be fine for Muslim children... but non-Muslim children should not be exposed to missionizing propaganda of this sort,” he concluded.

One day after the April 19, 1995, Oklahoma City bombing, Pipes told *USA Today*, “People need to understand that this is just the beginning. The [Muslim] fundamentalists are on the upsurge, and they make it clear that they are targeting us.” In fact, the bombing was carried out by Timothy

McVeigh, an antigovernment American extremist who had nothing to do with Islam.

This religion would seem to have nothing functional to offer,” Pipes said of Islam in 1996. In 1990, Pipes asserted, “Western European societies are unprepared for the massive immigration of brown-skinned peoples cooking strange foods and maintaining different standards of hygiene... All immigrants bring exotic customs and attitudes, but Muslim customs are more troublesome than most.” Pipes has stated that the views of far-right French racist Jean-Marie Le Pen “represent an important outlook in the national debate over immigration and Islam” and said that he (Pipes) supports racial and religious profiling of Muslims and Arabs.<sup>a</sup>

- a Mark Potok, *Field Guide to Anti-Muslim Extremists*. (Montgomery, Alabama, USA: Southern Poverty Law Center, Media Matters for America, The Center for New Community, and ReThink Media, October 2016).  
[http://www.tmoamerica.org/images/article\\_data/splc\\_field\\_guide\\_to\\_antimuslim\\_extremists\\_0.pdf](http://www.tmoamerica.org/images/article_data/splc_field_guide_to_antimuslim_extremists_0.pdf)

492 **‘Abdullāh ibn Salām ibn al-Ḥārith** (circa 550–43AH) – also known as Abū Yūsuf, said to be from the descendants of the Prophet Yūsuf (ﷺ). Before Islam he belonged to Banū Qaynuqā’, the Jewish faction of Yathrib that was allied with the Khazraj. It is said that his name was al-Ḥaṣīn ibn Salām, and that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave him the name ‘Abdullāh (on the authority of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Sa’d). Ibn Salām became a Muslim upon the Prophet’s arrival in Madinah. Some narratives say that he became a Muslim eight years after the Prophet arrived in Madinah.

There were some hadiths that were narrated from him by such persons as Abū Hurayrah, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ma’qal, Anas ibn Mālik, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥanzalah, Kharashaḥ ibn al-Ḥurr, Qays ibn ‘Ibād, Abū Salamah ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, and others. A statement by ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām says, “When the Prophet arrived in Madinah, I was one who was startled. But then when I took a closer look at him [virtually looking him in the eye], I realized he was not a liar. I heard him say, ‘*Spread peace and provide food...*’”<sup>a</sup>.

- a Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded in all the major *sunan*.

أَفِيضِ السَّلَامَ . وَ أَطْعِمِ الطَّعَامَ . وَ صِلِ الْأَرْحَامَ . وَ قُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَ النَّاسُ نِيَامٌ . وَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ .

493 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 862.

494 Ibid.

- 495 Jonathan Law and Richard Rennie (editors), *Oxford Dictionary of Physics, 7th Edition*. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 496 John W. Wright, Matt Fisher, and C. Alan Joyce (editors), *The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge*. (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), pp. 355–62.
- 497–533 Ibid.
- 534 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 911–12.
- 535–541 Ibid.
- 542 Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (editors), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 733–34.
- 543–546 Ibid.
- 547 **Pleistocene Epoch** – typically defined as the time period that began about 2.6 million years ago and lasted until about 11,700 years ago. The most recent Ice Age occurred then, as glaciers covered huge parts of the planet.
- 548 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 432.
- 549 Ibid., p. 459.
- 550 Ibid., p. 760.
- 551 Apes are primates, mammals that share the following characteristics:
- hair instead of fur;
  - fingernails instead of claws;
  - opposable thumbs;
  - higher brain-to-body size ratio meaning a high level of intelligence;
  - prehensility (ability to grasp with fingers and/or toes);
  - padded digits with fingerprints;
  - binocular vision, that is, both eyes focus on one object (depth perception); and
  - reduced olfactory sense and dependent on vision more than smell.

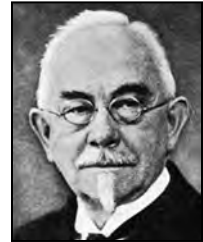
Apes and monkeys are often confused. Although there are a number of differences between apes and monkeys (apes have a longer lifespan, larger body size, larger brain-to-body size ratio, and higher intelligence), the main difference is that monkeys have tails and apes do not.

The difference between great apes and lesser apes is general size. There are two types of lesser apes: gibbons and siamangs, both found in Southeast Asia. As for the great apes, there are four types: gorillas, bonobos, and chimpanzees, which are found in Africa, and orangutans, which live in Southeast Asia (source: <http://www.centerforgreatapes.org/treatment-apes/about-apes/>).

552 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَدُّ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ.

553 When coined by Danish botanist **Wilhelm Johannsen** in 1909, the term *gene* referred to a hypothetical entity; only recently, with the study of DNA, has the structure, size, and location of genes begun to be established. A gene in the nuclear DNA coding for a particular protein (or part of a protein) can exist in several pieces, interrupted by intervening non-coding DNA sequences. The non-coding sequences are then cut out and the remainder spliced together in transcribing the DNA information into the RNA message to be acted upon in the cytoplasm.



Scientists now are making inroads into the definition, description, or understanding of the human gene — the unit of heredity that defines a trait or characteristic. A gene represents a region of DNA that codes for the sequence of amino acids of a specific protein. Consequently DNA is said to be the “blueprint” of the cell’s proteins. The cell nucleus contains a set of chromosomes with many thousands of genes.

*Mutagens* are agents that alter genes by attacking the DNA molecule, changing the genetic structure and causing mutations. Once a mutation has occurred, it is passed from one generation to the next. Mutagens are a diverse group of agents: certain endogenous chemicals in plants, as well as pollutants, certain pesticides, and some synthetic food additives, even ultra-violet light, can cause mutations. This is a major concern because most mutagens are cancer-causing agents (carcinogens).

In the nucleus of a human cell, chromosomes occur in pairs. Each member of a pair of genes is called an *allele*, which may be dominant or recessive. In a simple scenario, one or both genes of a pair of alleles may be dominant; therefore the trait determined by the gene is expressed. A recessive trait (autosomal recessive gene) will not be expressed if it is paired with a dominant gene, though it will nonetheless be carried along through inheritance. Individuals who carry the recessive trait possess one normal gene and one modified gene and are classified as heterozygotes (hybrids). A gene coding for a defective protein is expressed when two recessive genes are inherited (homozygotes), leading to the occurrence of certain rare genetic diseases at birth.

Several genetic diseases are based upon altered metabolism due to mutant enzymes. About 5% of cases with highly elevated blood cholesterol are due to genetic alterations in proteins responsible for cholesterol metabolism or transport. Typical examples are phenylketonuria, which reflects a defect in the metabolism of the amino acid phenylalanine, and galactosemia, the result of a defect in the metabolism of the sugar galactose. The severe effects of phenylketonuria can be avoided by strict dietary measures initiated soon after birth to avoid ingesting excessive amounts of phenylalanine. Early detection is the best strategy. Individuals who carry a recessive gene and a normal gene usually do not experience the genetic disease. For example, about one person in a hundred carries the trait for phenylketonuria while those with phenylketonuria possess a pair of abnormal genes — a much rarer occurrence (one out of 10,000 births).

Genetic polymorphism refers to the multiple genetic variants for a given protein, such as hemoglobin, the oxygen carrier protein of red blood cells. Most of the protein variants function more or less normally and do not directly cause disease. On the other hand, it is the slight differences in proteins reflecting differences in genetic makeup that account for individual traits among people. As a consequence, there will be slightly different nutrient requirements for optimal health among different persons. Their levels of liver detoxification enzymes will also vary. This variation partially explains why different individuals vary in their susceptibility to toxins, medications, anesthetics, and even cigarette smoke.

554 Franjo Terhart and Janina Schulze, *World Religions: Origins, History, Practices, Beliefs, Worldview*. (Bath, United Kingdom: Paragon Publishing, 2007), p. 300.

555 Ibid.

556 Ibid.

**shamans** – mediators between this life and the hereafter. The hereafter and the supernatural realm are referred to as the otherworld. Shamans are also healers; they believe that the temporal sentient world, and everyday reality are ruled by powers that are beyond human comprehension, but not beyond the reach of the human soul.

A person recognizes that he/she has the gifts necessary to become a shaman through special experiences such as signs, dreams, visions, or health crises. After an appropriate initiation, he/she then begins an apprenticeship with one or several shamans that can extend over many years.

Shamans fulfilled an important spiritual function in the archaic cultures of the hunter-gatherer peoples, maybe as a diversion or deviation from the

*fiṭrah*. The shaman determines what has made a patient so weak that evil spirits could invade and possess him — for example black magic performed by malevolent neighbors, warlocks, or sorcerers. Severe sicknesses involving impaired consciousness are usually interpreted as the loss of a part of the person's soul: the soul has been abducted, and it becomes the shaman's task to locate it in the otherworld and retrieve it. To do so, the shaman enters a trance state (through dance, drumming, or drugs) and travels to the otherworld — a dangerous place where spirits and demons rule.

557 **menopause** – strictly defined as the cessation of menstruation, but more commonly used to refer to the period of time (up to eight years prior to the cessation of menstruation) when the menstrual cycle becomes less regular, due to the loss of responsiveness of the ovaries to gonadotrophins; also known as *climacteric*. Even though menstruation may be irregular, reproductive capacity is not lost. The complete cessation of menstruation usually occurs between 45 and 50 years. It is often accompanied by physical (sweating, hot flushes, vaginitis) and psychogenic (depression, insomnia, fatigue) disturbances, which generally respond to estrogen therapy. Menopause is unique to the human female, but its significance is still scientifically unclear.

558 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded in the *sunans* of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Ibn Ḥabbān.

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبْوَاهُ يَهُودَانِهِ وَيُنَصْرَانِهِ وَيَجَسَّاسَانِهِ.

559 Narrated by 'Iyāḍ ibn Ḥimār and recorded by Muslim.

يقولُ اللهُ تَعَالَى "إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ فَجَاءَتْهُمْ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ . وَحَرَمْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا أَحَلَّلْتُ لَهُمْ."

560 It is not known how the current American military occupation of Iraq will end; if it ends on terms favorable to the American side Iraq may quickly replace Saudi Arabia as the linchpin of American imperialist policies in the Muslim East. Evidence for this view is sustained by recent developments in the excessively ingratiating behavior of the official Iraqi government, such as the invitation extended to arch-Zionist and neocon war criminal **Michael Rubin** to speak at an 'Āshurā' gathering in Imam Ḥusayn's *masjid*.

During the Bush/Cheney administration (2001–2009), Rubin was one of the key workers at the Office of Special Plans (OSP) with Douglas Feith, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Abram Shulsky, Michael Ledeen, and Michael Makovsky, cooking up the "Iraq has WMDs" lie that would be used as the pretext for the US-British-Zionist invasion. Before working in the Pentagon's most secretive and destructive intelligence agency, he was

writing up hasbara for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), AIPAC's think tank, as well as the Middle East Forum, founded by the aforementioned leading Islamophobe, Daniel Pipes. Today, he's a bigwig at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), funded by Zionist hedge fund billionaire Bruce Kovner, a Dick Cheney whisperer.

Prior to the OSP, Rubin was a lecturer at Hebrew University, one of the central pillars of Israel's all-penetrating Talpiot program, and the Universities of Suleimaniyah, Salahuddin, and Duhok, premier schools of Iraq's "Kurdistan" that churn out Kurdish intelligence agents who work hand-in-glove with Mossad. Rubin was right in the thick of the AIPAC spying case involving Larry Franklin, a Wolfowitz and Feith functionary who dutifully passed a document authored by Rubin to Israel about implementing regime change in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Rubin, a fervent hater of the Islamic Revolution who longs to see it overthrown, alongside OSP homeboy Makovsky, authored "Meeting the Challenge: US Policy Toward Iranian Nuclear Development," a step-by-step process in how to launch a war against Iran (source: <http://mouqawamahmusic.net/disgrace-to-iraq-disgrace-to-islam-neocon-war-criminal-michael-rubin-defiles-imam-husseins-a-s-shrine-with-his-presence/>).



561 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 373–74.

562 Ibid.

**De libero arbitrio** – a book written by St. Augustine of Hippo about the freedom of will. Young Augustine wrote it in three volumes, one in Rome, after his baptism (387–389CE), and the other two between 391–395CE, after his priestly ordination in Africa.

563 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 373–74.

564 Ibid.

565 Ibid.

566 Ibid., pp. 265–66.





**ides** – in the ancient Roman calendar, a day falling roughly in the middle of each month (the 15th day of March, May, July, and October, and the 13th of other months) from which other dates were calculated.

580 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 1068.

**hermeneutics** – the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts.

581 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 580.

582 Ibid.

**realism** – an approach to philosophy that regards external objects as the most fundamentally real things, and perceptions or ideas as secondary. Realism is thus opposed to idealism. Materialism and naturalism are forms of realism. Realism is also used to describe a movement in literature that attempts to portray life as it is.

**nominalism** – in metaphysics, the view that only individual things exist in the full sense. Universals and properties (for instance, “redness”) have no independent reality, but are just names.

**rationalism** – any view appealing to reason as a source of knowledge or justification. Reason can be contrasted with revelation, in religion, or with emotion and feeling as in ethics, but in philosophy it is usually contrasted with senses (including introspection, but not intuition). “Rationalist” is to “*a priori*” somewhat as “empiricist” is to “empirical,” though the empiricist is more likely to apply his view to all knowledge. Rationalism is an outlook that somehow emphasizes the *a priori* and also the innate. Rationalism has a variety of interpretations corresponding to those of empiricism. A philosopher can be both a rationalist and an empiricist, in different though important respects (for example, Immanuel Kant); but such philosophers are often thought to be best classified as neither. The designation “continental rationalists” is a traditional label given to Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, with various lesser figures of that period who are regarded as sharing their general outlook.

**empiricism** – any of a variety of views to the effect that either human concepts or human knowledge are, wholly or partly, based on experience through the senses and introspection. The “basing” may refer to psychological origin or, more usually, philosophical justification. An extreme empiricist may confine his knowledge to statements about sense data, plus perhaps an-

alytic statements. A less extreme empiricist may say that such statements must form the basis on which all other human knowledge is erected. Other empiricists, however, may simply deny that there are any *a priori* propositions, or any synthetic or non-analytic *a priori* ones. Or they may say that if there are any *a priori* propositions, there are still no innate concepts. A weak form of empiricism may say only that some knowledge can be acquired through the senses. An empiricist view of some given concept or proposition is somehow based on experience.

Sometimes empiricism has taken the form of a doctrine of meaning, saying that a word or sentence has meaning only if rules involving sense experience can be given for applying or verifying it. Analytic sentences are excepted. Such rules may further constitute meaning. This is often called *logical empiricism*.

583 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 580.

584 Ibid.

585 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 849–52.

586–598 Ibid.

599 John W. Wright (general editor), *The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge*. (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), pp. 752–62.

600–605 Ibid.

606 Ibid.

**G8** – the forum originated with a 1975 summit hosted by France that brought together representatives of six governments: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, thus leading to the name Group of Six or G6. The summit came to be known as the Group of Seven, or G7, in 1976 with the addition of Canada. Russia was added to the political forum from 1997, which the following year became known as the G8. In March 2014, Russia was suspended indefinitely following the annexation of Crimea, whereupon the political forum name reverted to G7. In 2017, Russia announced its permanent withdrawal from the G8. However, several representatives of G7 countries stated that they would be interested in Russia's return to the group.

607 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Volume 3, pp. 1404–05.

608 Ibid.

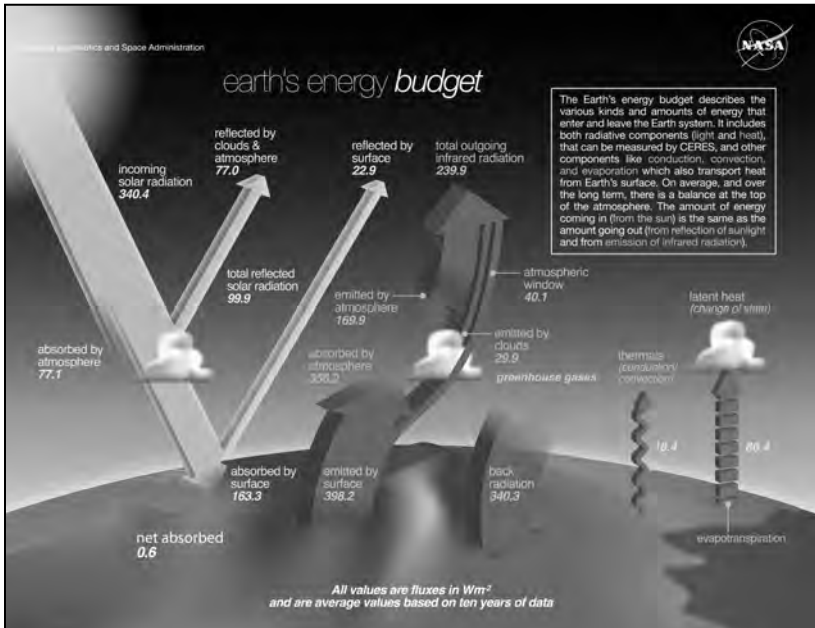
609 As stated in *Sūrah al-Muddaththir*, āyah 74:24.

610 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fi Żilāl al-Qurʿān*, Volume 3, pp. 1405.

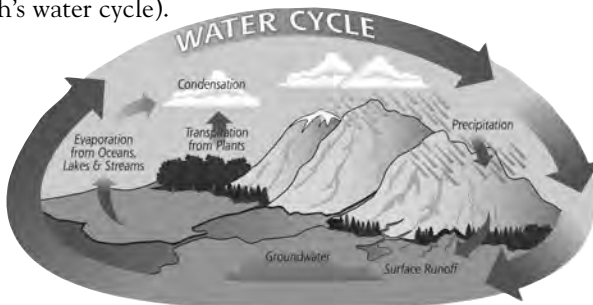
611 Ibid.

612 Derek Elsom, *Earth: the Making, Shaping, and Workings of a Planet*. (New York, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), pp. 8–11.

613 Ibid (Earth’s energy balance).



614 Ibid (Earth’s water cycle).



615 Ibid (Earth's atmosphere).

The atmosphere can be divided into layers based on its temperature, as shown in the figure. These layers are the troposphere, the stratosphere, the mesosphere, and the thermosphere. A further region, beginning about 500 km above the Earth's surface, is called the exosphere.

1. **troposphere** – the lowest part of the atmosphere — the part we live in. It contains most of our weather — clouds, rain, snow. In this part of the atmosphere the temperature gets colder as the distance above the Earth increases, by about  $6.5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{km}$ . The actual change of temperature with height varies from day to day, depending on the weather. The troposphere contains about 75% of all of the air in the atmosphere, and almost all of the water vapor (which forms clouds and rain). The decrease in temperature with height is a result of the decreasing pressure. If a parcel of air moves upward it expands (because of the lower pressure). When air expands it cools. So air higher up is cooler than air lower down.

The lowest part of the troposphere is called the boundary layer. This is where the air motion is determined by the properties of the Earth's surface. Turbulence is generated as the wind blows over the Earth's surface, and by thermals rising from the land as it is heated by the Sun. This turbulence redistributes heat and moisture within the boundary layer, as well as pollutants and other constituents of the atmosphere. The top of the troposphere is called the tropopause. This is lowest at the poles, where it is about 7–10 km above the Earth's surface. It is highest (about 17–18 km) near the Equator.

2. **stratosphere** – extends upward from the tropopause to about 50 km. It contains much of the ozone in the atmosphere. The increase in temper-



ature with height occurs because of absorption of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the Sun by this ozone. Temperatures in the stratosphere are highest over the summer pole, and lowest over the winter pole. By absorbing dangerous UV radiation, the ozone in the stratosphere protects us from skin cancer and other health damage. However chemicals (called CFCs or freons, and halons), which were once used in refrigerators, spray cans, and fire extinguishers have reduced the amount of ozone in the stratosphere, particularly at polar latitudes, leading to the so-called “Antarctic ozone hole.” Now that man has stopped making most of the harmful CFCs, it is expected that the ozone hole will eventually recover over the 21st century, but this is a slow process.

3. **mesosphere** – the region above the stratosphere. Here the temperature again decreases with height, reaching a minimum of about  $-90^{\circ}\text{C}$  at the “mesopause.”
4. **thermosphere and ionosphere** – the thermosphere lies above the mesopause, and is a region in which temperatures again increase with height. This temperature increase is caused by the absorption of energetic UV and X-ray radiation from the Sun.

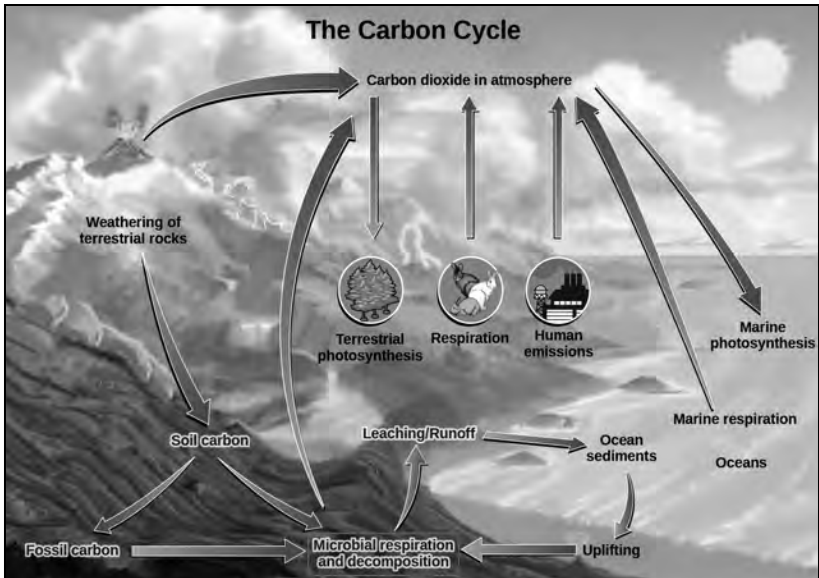
The region of the atmosphere above about 80 km is also called the ionosphere, since the energetic solar radiation knocks electrons off molecules and atoms, turning them into ions with a positive charge (cations). The temperature of the thermosphere varies between night and day and between the seasons, as do the numbers of ions and electrons that are present. The ionosphere reflects and absorbs radio waves, allowing one part of the world to receive shortwave radio broadcasts from other parts.

5. **exosphere** – the region above about 500 km. It contains mainly oxygen and hydrogen atoms, but there are so few of them that they rarely collide; they follow “ballistic” trajectories under the influence of gravity, and some of them escape right out into space.
6. **magnetosphere** – the Earth behaves like a huge magnet. It traps electrons (negative charge) and protons (positive), concentrating them in two bands about 3,000 and 16,000 km above the globe — the Van Allen “radiation” belts. This outer region surrounding the Earth, where charged particles spiral along the magnetic field lines, is called the magnetosphere (source: <https://www.niwa.co.nz/education-and-training/schools/students/layers>).

616–619 Ibid.

620 Ibid.

621 Ibid (Earth’s carbon cycle).



Carbon is the chemical backbone of life on Earth. We are made of carbon, we eat carbon, and our civilizations — our economies, our homes, our means of transport — are built on carbon. We need carbon, but that need is also entwined with one of the most serious problems facing us today: global climate change. Carbon is both the foundation of all life on Earth, and the source of the majority of energy consumed by human civilization.

Forged in the heart of aging stars, carbon is the fourth most abundant element in the universe. Most of Earth's carbon — about 65,500 billion metric tons — is stored in rocks. The rest is in the ocean, atmosphere, plants, soil, and fossil fuels.

Carbon flows between each reservoir in an exchange called the carbon cycle, which has slow and fast components. Any change in the cycle that shifts carbon out of one reservoir puts more carbon in the other reservoirs. Changes that put carbon gases into the atmosphere result in warmer temperatures on Earth.

Over the long term, the carbon cycle seems to maintain a balance that prevents all of Earth's carbon from entering the atmosphere (as is the case on Venus) or from being stored entirely in rocks. This balance helps keep Earth's temperature relatively stable, like a thermostat. This thermostat works over a few hundred thousand years, as part of the slow carbon cycle. This means that for shorter time periods — tens to a hundred thousand years — the temperature of the Earth can vary. And, in fact, Earth swings between ice ages and warmer interglacial periods on these time scales. Parts of the carbon cycle may even amplify these short-term temperature changes.

The uplift of the Himalaya mountains, beginning 50 million years ago, reset Earth's thermostat by providing a large source of fresh rock to pull more carbon into the slow carbon cycle through chemical weathering. The resulting drop in temperatures and the formation of ice sheets changed the ratio between heavy and light oxygen in the deep ocean.

On very long time scales (millions to tens of millions of years), the movement of tectonic plates and changes in the rate at which carbon seeps from the Earth's interior may change the temperature on the thermostat. Earth has undergone such a change over the last 50 million years, from the extremely warm climates of the Cretaceous — roughly 145 to 65 million years ago — to the glacial climates of the Pleistocene — roughly 1.8 million to 11,500 years ago (source: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/features/CarbonCycle/page1.php>).

622 Ibid.

623 Ibid.

624 Derek Elsom, *Earth*, pp. 8–11.

625 Ibid.

626 Ibid.

627 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir*, Volume 9, p. 187 (originally from *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*).

628 Ibid (originally from *Tafsir al-Tabari*).

629 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تطلع الشمس من مغربها . فإذا طلعت ورأها الناس آمنوا أجمعون . فذلك حين: لا ينفع نفسا إيمانها لم تكن آمنت من قبل أو كسبت في إيمانها خيرا . ولتقوم الساعة وقد نشر الرجلان ثوبهما بينهما . فلا يتبايعانه ولا يطويانه . ولتقوم الساعة وقد انصرف الرجل بلبن لقحته فلا يطعمه . ولتقوم الساعة والرجل يُلبط حوضه فلا يسقي فيه . ولتقوم الساعة والرجل قد رفع أكلته إلى فيه فلا يطعمها .

630 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 321–22.

631–639 Ibid.

640 The Final Hour, Final Day, Last Hour, or Last Day on earth is not the same as the Day of Judgement, the Day of Accountability, or the Day of Resurrection, though the two designations in English have often been used interchangeably. The Final Hour on earth is still subject to the limitations of its physical and



other laws, and the particulars of its domain: time and dimensional space, the senses, etc; however, this is when the transition to the eternal life begins, when the door to the Day of Resurrection has opened, and thus a transformation from the finite to the infinite, from the time-bound to the timeless, from three-dimensional space to less constrained forms of existence.

641 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir*, Volume 9, p. 196.

642 Wendy Doniger (consulting editor), *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions*. (Springfield, Massachusetts, USA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1999), p. 334.

643 Ibid.

644 Ibid.

**Origen** (circa 184–253CE) – known in Latin as Oregenes Adamantius, he was the most important theologian and biblical scholar of the early Greek church. His most massive work was the *Hexapla*, a parallel edition of six versions of the Old Testament. He probably lived, traveled, and taught in the area between Alexandria, Egypt and ancient Phoenicia (now, Sur, Lebanon).



Eusebius (circa 265–340CE) stated that Origen's father, Leonides, was martyred in the persecution of 202CE, so that Origen had to provide for his mother and six younger brothers. He earned money by teaching grammar and lived a life of strenuous asceticism. Eusebius added that he was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, whom he succeeded as head of the Catechetical school under the authority of the Bishop Demetrius. Eusebius also alleged that Origen, as a young man, castrated himself so as to work freely in instructing female catechumens; but this may merely have been hostile gossip.

According to Porphyry, Origen attended lectures given by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of Neoplatonism. A letter of Origen mentions his "teacher of philosophy," at whose lectures he met Heraclas, who was to become his junior colleague, then his rival. During this period (from 212CE), Origen learned Hebrew and began to compile his *Hexapla*. At Alexandria he wrote *Stromateis* (*Miscellanies*), *Peri anastaseos* (*On the Resurrection*), and *De principiis* (*On First Principles*). He also began his immense commentary on St. John, written to refute the commentary of the Gnostic follower of Valentinus, Heracleon.

About 229–230CE Origen went to Greece to dispute with another follower of Valentinus, Candidus. On the way he was ordained presbyter at

Caesarea Palestinae. The Valentinian doctrine that salvation and damnation are predestinate, independent of volition, was defended by Candidus on the ground that Satan is beyond repentance; Origen replied that if Satan fell by will, even he can repent. Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, was appalled by such a doctrinal view and instigated a synodical condemnation, which, however, was not accepted in Greece and Palestine. Thenceforth, Origen lived at Caesarea, where he attracted many pupils. One of his most notable students was Gregory Thaumaturgus, later bishop of Neocaesarea.

Origen's main lifework was on the text of the Greek Old Testament and on the exposition of the whole Bible. The *Hexapla* was a synopsis of Old Testament versions: the Hebrew and a transliteration, the Septuagint, the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion and, for the Psalms, two further translations (one being discovered by him in a jar in the Jordan Valley). The purpose of the *Hexapla* was to provide a secure basis for debate with rabbis to whom the Hebrew alone was authoritative.

Origen's great apologetic work, *Contra Celsum*, written (probably in 248) at Ambrose's request, answers the *Alethes logos* ("The True Doctrine" or "Discourse") of 2nd-century Christianity. Celsus' dismissal of Christianity as a crude and bucolic onslaught on the religious traditions and intellectual values of classical culture provoked Origen to argue that a philosophic mind has a right to think within a Christian framework and that the Christian faith is neither a prejudice of the unreasoning masses nor a crutch for social outcasts or nonconformists.

Everything in Origen's theology ultimately turns upon the goodness of God and the freedom of the creature. The transcendent God is the source of all existence and is good, just, and omnipotent. In overflowing love, God created rational and spiritual beings through the Logos (word); this creative act involves a degree of self-limitation on God's part. In one sense, the cosmos is eternally necessary to God since one cannot conceive such goodness and power as inactive at any time. Yet in another sense, the cosmos is not necessary to God but is dependent on His will, to which it also owes its continued existence. Origen was aware that there is no solution of this dilemma.

Origen speculated that souls fell varying distances, some to be angels, some descending into human bodies, and the most wicked becoming devils. Redemption is a grand education by Providence that restores all souls to their original blessedness, for no one, not even Satan himself, is so depraved and has so lost rationality and freedom as to be beyond redemption.

The influence of Origen's biblical exegesis and ascetic ideals is hard to overestimate; his commentaries were freely plagiarized by later exegetes, both eastern and western, and he is a seminal mind for the beginnings of monasticism. Through the writings of the monk Evagrius Ponticus (346–399CE), his ideas passed not only into the Greek ascetic tradition but also to John Cassian (360–435CE), a semi-Pelagian monk who emphasized

the worth of man's moral effort, and to the West. He was often attacked, suspected of adulterating the Gospel with pagan philosophy and his teachings were condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople (553CE). Nevertheless, Origen's influence persisted, such as in the writings of the Byzantine monk Maximus the Confessor (circa 550–662CE) and the Irish theologian John Scotus Erigena (circa 810–877CE).

645 **Abū al-Faḍl 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad Jalāl al-Dīn al-Khudayrī al-Suyūṭī** (849–911AH) – a multi-discipline Egyptian Shāfi'ī scholar, he contributed to the research and study of the Qur'an, Hadith, jurisprudence, biography, geography, history, philology, Sufism, and theology. Belonging to the Shādhilī Sufi *ṭarīqah*, he wrote in favor of Sufi disciplines such as *dhikr*. He is widely known for his completion of the elementary *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.

It is worth mentioning here that Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī quotes a few “hadiths” that speak of the world being around 7,000 years old. He also mentions that this Ummah shall last for no more than 500 years after its thousandth year. This he mentions in his epistle entitled, *al-Kashf 'an Mujāwazati Hādhihi al-Ummati al-Alf* (*Disclosure That this Ummah Will Exceed a Thousand [Years]*). He also says that at the end of his century the Mahdī will appear. Of course at least a couple of hundred years have passed and Imam Mahdī has not appeared yet. May the Almighty forgive al-Suyūṭī for his blunder.

646 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm* (better known as *Tafsīr al-Manār*), Volume 9. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1414AH), p. 472.

647 Ibid.

**Ka'b al-Aḥbār** (died 32AH) – Jewish convert to Islam who spread a knowledge of Jewish traditions among the Muslims. A native of Yemen, he went to Madinah shortly after the Prophet's death and, though advanced in age, there embraced Islam. He was held in high esteem by some Muslims and often questioned about Jewish traditions mentioned in the Qur'an or in sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ)! His leverage lives on through the *isrā'iliyyāt* as an “authority” on certain issues, the one of the “end times” included. Refer also to **Endnote 576** in Volume 11 and **Endnote 475** in Volume 12.

**Wahb ibn Munabbih** (circa 34–110AH) – refer to **Endnote 475** in Volume 12.

648 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 9, p. 472.

649 Simon Pearson, *A Brief History of the End of the World: from Revelation to Eco-Disaster*. (New York, New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006), p. 58.

650 Ibid., p. 62.

651 Ibid., p. 79.

**Montanus** (second century CE) – according to church writings he is a promoter of a widespread early schism in Christianity occurring about the middle of the second century CE. Church teachings, which of course are one sided here, suggest that Montanus was a convert to Christianity from the rather peculiar paganism of his area, Phrygia. He and two “prophetesses, Prisca (Priscilla) and Maximilla, began what is known as Montanism or the Phrygian heresy.” Their emphasis was on the Paraclete’s continuing gift of prophecy, severe asceticism, a gradual restriction of the term “church” to a charismatic group of “spiritual” persons, and vibrant millennialism. At first Rome tended to look upon the movement with favor, but ultimately disapproved of it.

Montanus introduced the practice of ecstatic utterances into the gatherings of his followers, who were often seized with mass hysteria evoked by millenarian hopes that the Asia Minor city of Pepuza would be the apocalyptic new Jerusalem and the site of Christ’s second coming. The prophetesses Prisca and Maximilla were looked upon as instruments of the Holy Spirit extending the process of revelation beyond the text of scripture. According to the Church, the failure of the ecclesiastic officials to embrace and approve the movement caused it to become anti-institutional, schismatic, and heretical.

Perhaps the most famous convert to Montanism was the eminent North African theologian Tertullian, whose later writings came from his Montanist period. The movement disintegrated not long after Tertullian’s death. His conversion to it culminated in a deviation within the movement, many of the Montanists following him into a sect named for Tertullian. Vestiges of it, however, lingered into the fifth and sixth centuries CE.

652 Simon Pearson, *A Brief History of the End of the World*, pp. 107–08.

**Saracen** – ancient Greek and Roman term for an Arab, used in the Middle Ages by the Europeans for all Muslims. The equivalent term used in Spain was **Moor**.

653 Simon Pearson, *A Brief History of the End of the World*, pp. 107–08.

654 Ibid, p. 123.

**Thomas Müntzer** (circa 1489–1525) – radical German reformer, leader in the Peasants' Revolt (1525), an early Anabaptist, and Marxist precursor. Born in Stolberg in the Harz mountains, Müntzer studied at Leipzig and Frankfurt and became a priest. In 1519 he allied himself with Martin Luther, but soon felt Luther's justification by faith alone and political conservatism did not sufficiently promote reform and justice for the poor. Müntzer instituted radical liturgical changes during his stormy pastorate at Zwickau (1520–1523), but his reliance on direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit over scripture brought him into dispute with Luther. Expelled from Zwickau, Müntzer went to Allstedt, where he preached open rebellion. Luther helped drive him from Allstedt in 1524. He then went to Mühlhausen, was again expelled, but returned to inspire and lead a peasant army against the princes. Philip of Hesse overwhelmingly defeated the peasants at Frankenhausen, May 25, 1525. Müntzer and other leaders were beheaded.



**Taborite** – in the 15th century CE, a member of the militant body of Hussites maintaining a strict literal interpretation of the scriptures.

655 Simon Pearson, *A Brief History of the End of the World*, pp. 134–35.

656 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 9, pp. 480–81.

**‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn** (733–808AH/1332–1406CE) – often called the “father of historiography,” Ibn Khaldūn was born in present-day Tunisia. His life was extremely turbulent; at one time he served the Sultan in Fez as a functionary, but was imprisoned because of court intrigue. He regained his freedom and his position, but then other troubles forced him to go to Spain. At first, Ibn Khaldūn was well received at the court of Granada, but political turmoil forced him to flee to North Africa, where he was given a post by the Sultan of Bujiya with whom he had once shared imprisonment. War and vicissitudes forced him to return to Fez, and thence to Tunis where he wrote his *al-Muqaddimah* (*Prolegomena*).



Setting out east to perform the Hajj, Ibn Khaldūn entered into the service of the Mamlūk Sultan of Egypt, Barqūq. In Cairo he became the Grand Qāḍi (Chief Judge) of the Mālikī school of thought. He was dismissed and reinstated as many as five times, this office being notorious for the fact that its holder was bound to come into conflict with the ruler's wishes. On a mission to Damascus Ibn Khaldūn was trapped inside the city by the attacking army of Timūr (Tamerlane) and had to escape by letting himself down by a

rope from the city walls, in the face of the conquering Timūr; the latter allowed him to return to Egypt, where he died.

Ibn Khaldūn was an acute observer of human nature. He noted the tendency to admire and respect power, so that conquered people often adopt the habits and customs of the conquerors, even to the extent of adopting their dress. His observations in this domain were such that he could also be rightly called the “father of sociology.” In studying human nature, he was led to analyze the significance of sleep and to consider the prophetic character of certain dreams according to traditional psychology. Ibn Khaldūn equates dream sleep with the subtle state, and sleep without dreams to the formless or angelic state, each with its corresponding possibilities of knowledge.

However, it is not his speculations on spiritual psychology, or the social sciences that constitute his greatness, but his unique contribution to the understanding of history. Ibn Khaldūn’s great work, *al-Muqaddimah*, is the introduction to his *Kitāb al-‘Ibar* (*Book of Deterrent Examples — and the Collection of Origins of the History of the Arabs and Berbers*).

The Muslim peoples considered by Ibn Khaldūn are those whose habitats alternate between deserts and settled agricultural regions. Ibn Khaldūn’s theory explains a recurrent pattern in the history of these peoples: between nomads and sedentaries, who represent a primordial division of human existence in the world, he holds that there is under the best of conditions a natural state of tension. Moreover, town-dwellers inevitably tend to fall into decadence and moral corruption, from which the nomads are preserved by the arduous nature of their daily lives. Among the nomads, Ibn Khaldūn discerns a hierarchy dependent upon the intensity of their involvement with the rigors of the desert: at the summit are the camel herders who penetrate furthest into the desert; after them come the herders of sheep who stay on the fringes of the desert, and last in the hierarchy are the cattle herders, who are obliged to keep to easy pastures.

Periodically, groups of nomads conquer the towns and become the new rulers. According to Ibn Khaldūn’s theory, they at first bring a new vigor, sense of justice, and spiritual acuteness to the royal function, but after three generations, the vigor and the virtue that were needed to establish their sovereignty begin to ebb away from them. The princes of the first generation know what is required of them to become rulers; those of the second generation participated in the conquest, so that they too have firsthand knowledge of the requirements of kingship; the princes of the third generation, however, know of this only by hearsay; and those of the fourth believe that power and respect are no more than their due by birthright. Thus the “fourth” generation lives in a distorted, and illusory, memory of the past, and it is only a matter of time before it forfeits the right to rule. Thus, rulers and ruled alike are then laid open once more to a fresh and purifying influx of desert nomads.

Ibn Khaldūn stands apart from mere recorders of observed events; he sees effects in causes, endeavors to find the underlying reasons for historic change and explores a theory whereby future developments may be predicted. What Ibn Khaldūn drew from his observations of the rhythmic movements of history is a model that is not dissimilar to the moral of the story of Cain and Abel in the Bible.

Cain represents the farmer-sedentary who lives in time; Abel the hunter-nomad who lives in space. The farmer plants, and must wait to see the seeds grow and be transformed; he is bound to duration. The hunter stalks a prey, and successfully kills it when an instantaneous identity takes place between the hunter and the prey, as symbolized by the arrow that finds its mark. There is no duration, but a perfect moment. The art of the sedentary is pictures, for pictures represent the other dimension, space. The art of the nomad is words, or poetry, for in poetry there is succession of events, or time, the invisible dimension of the nomad's life. The murder of Abel by Cain signifies the destruction of space by time. At the beginning, the world was an endless space, and time was eternity, only a rhythm, a return to the same moment. With the Fall, change enters into the world, and thence into society; eventually change begins to dominate it, and time becomes a duration. The biblical story recapitulates the history of the world as the absorption of space by time as duration, or as Abel's death agony.

In the garden of Eden, Eve was never separated from Adam (ﷻ). But when the wheel becomes the means of transport, when electronic communications impose themselves as the medium, then knowledge that is direct, and recognition that is face to face recede. An inevitable gap opens up, the mirror of identity darkens. It may be only hours between continents by airplane or microseconds by telephone, but in those microseconds the separation is absolute. No matter how swift they are, communications that are born of time are never in the present, but are ghosts out of the dead past. Adam has lost Eve. Cain's sacrifices of time (rather than of himself, as symbolized by Abel's sheep), like his satellites in space, do not win God's blessing. Cain has wandered into the "Land of Nod," the world of history and change, the modern world.

When history begins, as it does with Cain and Abel, there also begins the movement away from unity, which is a movement away from the center. This movement is toward multiplicity, and toward a multitude of illusory "centers." "Perfect" or "absolute" multiplicity is an unattainable limit, but one toward which history tends and which is its ultimate goal. What Ibn Khaldūn observed in *al-Muqaddimah* was the dynamics of the two poles in human history, still in their traditional phase, a weaving taking place between nomads and sedentaries, before the sedentaries completely engulfed or destroyed the nomads altogether, or before Cain finished killing Abel.

**‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm** (384–456AH/994–1064CE) – a theologian of Arab-Persian descent born in Cordoba, he was a violent opponent of the Ash‘arīs. Literalist and singular in his approach, critics said he was a chauvinist in regard to Islam, the Arabs, and Muslim Spain. He followed the Zāhiri (exoterist) school of thought, and thus maintained that the only level of meaning in the Qur‘an was the explicit; according to him no hidden meanings were admissible. He wrote many books on a variety of subjects including philosophy, history, and descriptions of different sects and schools of thought. For his highly polemical stands he spent the latter years of his life in a kind of internal exile, and the number of disciples was restricted by the authorities. He was also a poet.



**Abū al-Faḍl ‘Iyāḍ ibn Mūsā al-Yaḥṣubī al-Sabtī al-Qāḍī** (1083–1149CE) – during his lifetime he was considered within the Mālikī school of thought to be the scholar of the age. He was renowned for his knowledge of Hadith, grammar, language, and the history and pedigree of the Arabians. One of his famed books is *Kitāb al-Ikmāl fī Sharḥ Kitāb Muslim* (*The Book of Completeness in Explaining the Book of [Ṣaḥīḥ] Muslim*). Another is *Mashāriq al-Anwār* (*The Aurora of Lights*), an interesting book dealing with the extraordinary hadiths in the three *Ṣaḥīḥs* compiled by Mālik ibn Anas (*al-Muwatta‘a*), al-Bukhārī, and Muslim. Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ went to Andalusia in search of knowledge. He was a judge in the city of Sabtaḥ (where he was born) for a long time. From there he was transferred to Granada where he did not stay for long. He died in Marrakesh.

657 Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder (editor-in-chief), *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, 7th Edition. (New York, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1992), pp. 310–11.

658–661 Ibid.

662 Ibid.

663 Narrated by Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and recorded by Muslim.

ما أنتم يومئذ في النابس إلا كالشعرة البيضاء في الثور الأسود أو كالشعرة السوداء في الثور الأبيض.

664 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

بُعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةَ كَهَاتَيْنِ.



665 Narrated by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

قال [الرجل] "فأخبرني عن الساعة." قال [النبي ﷺ] "ما المسؤول عنها بأعلم من السائل." قال [الرجل] "فأخبرني عن أماراتها." قال [النبي ﷺ] "أن تليد الأمة ربتها . وأن ترى الحفاة العراة العالة رعاء الشاء يتطاولون في البنيان."

666 Gavin Gibbon, *Dubai may become crane capital of the world again*. (Dubai, United Arab Emirates: Arabian Business website, May 14, 2014).  
<https://www.arabianbusiness.com/dubai-may-become-crane-capital-of-world-again-550182.html>

667 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تقتتل فئتان عظيمتان . تكون بينهما مقتلة عظيمة . دعوتهما واحدة . وحتى يُبعث دجالون كذابون . قريب من ثلاثين . كلهم يزعم أنه رسول الله . وحتى يُقبض العلم وتكثر الزلازل . ويتقارب الزمان . وتظهر الفتن . ويكثر الهرج . وهو القتل . وحتى يكثر فيكم المال . فيفيض حتى يهتّم ربّ المال من قبيل صدقته [وحتى يعرضه . فيقول الذي يعرضه عليه "لا أربّ لي به"] . وحتى يتطاول الناس في البنيان . وحتى يمرّ الرجل بقبر الرجل فيقول "يا ليتني مكانه" . وحتى تطلع الشمس من مغربها . فإذا طلعت ورأها الناس آمنوا أجمعون . فذلك حين: لا ينفع نفساً إيمانها لم تكن آمنت من قبل أو كسبت في إيمانها خيراً . ولتقوم الساعة وقد نشر الرجلان ثوبهما بينهما . فلا يتبايعانه ولا يطويانه . ولتقوم الساعة وقد انصرف الرجل بلين لقّخته فلا يطعمه . ولتقوم الساعة وهو يليب حوضه فلا يسقي فيه . ولتقوم الساعة وقد رفع أكلته إلى فيه فلا يطعمها .

*The Final Hour will not commence until two great camps duel it out with each other in a substantive way — both sharing the same calling;<sup>a</sup> it will not commence until there are around thirty imposters — each claiming to be Allah’s Messenger;<sup>b</sup> until knowledge is withdrawn;<sup>c</sup> until there are numerous earthquakes;<sup>d</sup> until time is compacted;<sup>e</sup> until seditious acts surface and acts of murder and genocide appear;<sup>f</sup> until money is so abundant that a financier will not find a person to give charitable money to; until people compete as to who will have the tallest building; until a person passes by the grave of another and says, “I wish I was in his place”; and until the Sun rises from its sunset — and when that happens all people will adhere in faith to Allah, but at that time, “...a soul will not benefit from its faith if that faith was not there before — faithfully generating commitment and richness...” (6:158).*

a This could be in reference to the war between Imam ‘Alī and the first king in Muslim history, Mu‘āwiyah.

b In recent times this could be in reference to the “Bāb” and the “Bahā” in Iran, even though the latter claimed divinity. Then there is the Indian Messiah imposter, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), who was born in Qadian, Gurdaspur — hence the name Qadiani movement. Pity the people who are misled by these false “prophets.”

- c The hadith in the *Two Ṣaḥīḥs* was narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah, who heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say, "Allah does not withdraw knowledge by forcing it away from people; He withdraws it by recalling the 'ulamā' until there is such a time when there are no [real] 'ulamā'; at that time people appoint presidents in those positions. These presidents are asked questions [which they have no knowledge of — questions pertaining to Islamic sources] and they issue their verdicts and opinions by which they go astray and cause others to go astray."

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ . وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ . حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يُبْقِ عَالِمًا . اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُؤُوسًا جُهَّالًا . فَسُئِلُوا . فَأُفْتُوا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ . فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا .

- d There are always a number of earthquakes happening. But it appears from this hadith that the frequency will be at an all time high. The Final Hour itself is a grand quake of sorts "...the violent convulsion of the Last Hour will be an awesome thing!" (22:1).
- e There are hadiths that indicate toward the end of time in this world a year will feel like a month, a month will feel like a week, and a week will feel like a day, and a day will feel like the period it takes to burn a tree branch. This may be in reference to the expedited communication and speedy transportation that have come about as a matter of technology. Some would say that this is in reference to the absence of "blessings" in people's lives, step by step and increasingly. What is for sure though is that what can be done in one hour nowadays may have needed months and years in past centuries.
- f Sedition and acts of violence and death have been a characteristic of all generations. What has not been a characteristic of all generations is the wholesale killing, the world wars, the wars of genocide, the weapons of mass destruction, mutually assured destruction, and nuclear weapons. These are features of contemporary times and they may be the fulfillment of this quote.

668 The conventional understanding of this is that Allah (ﷻ) first created Adam and then created Eve (ﷺ) as his partner and mate. Another Qur'anically based understanding says that Adam was not the first bio-being; rather he was the first socio-being. This analysis can be found in the book *Abī Ādam: Qiṣṣatu al-Khalīqati bayna al-Uṣṭūrati wa-al-Ḥaqīqati (Adam Is My Father: the Story of Creation Between Myth and Fact)* by Dr. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn.

669 Yet, in "Islamic" *tafsīr* literature, contrary to the standards of cooperation and values of respect, equality, and sharing there are some so-called hadiths

that say Eve (ﷺ) was influenced by Satan to give her son the name 'Abd al-Ḥārith, with Ḥārith being another name of Satan — and that Eve influenced Adam (ﷺ) to accept this! The only explanation for the explicit Qur'an to become polluted with such nonsense, is once again the *isrā'iliyāt* that have wormed their way into the understanding of this holy guidance.

670 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān*, Volume 3, p. 1416.

671 Ibid.

672 Ibid.

673 Ibid., pp. 1424–25.

674 Ibid., p. 1425.

675 Narrated by Abū Mūsá al-Ash'arī and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

يا أيها الناس إريعوا على أنفسكم فإنكم لا تدعون أصم ولا غائبا . إن الذي تدعونه سميع قريب أقرب إلى أحدكم من عنق راحلته.

676 There are some *fiqhī* details as to whether there is a “*salām*” to this *sajdah* at the end, and to whether a person should raise his hands as he does when he says *takbirah al-iḥrām*. There are also some details about whether or not a *sajdah* should be performed when a *sajdah āyah* is recited during the *ṣalāh*.



# Glossary

**Ahl al-Bayt** – *literally, the folks of the Prophet’s household, in particular, Imam ‘Alī, his wife Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’, their oldest sons, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn, and their direct descendants.* Today, in practice, those who identify themselves as the devotees of Ahl al-Bayt, generally Shī’īs, consider the pronouncements of the Imams to be an unerring representation of the Sunnah, and thereby second to the Qur’an.

**Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jamā’ah** – *folks adhering to the Prophet’s Sunnah and identifying with the majority congregation of Muslims.* The term was coined and promulgated by King Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, who by its use, sought to confer legitimacy on his tribal usurpation and corruption of Islamic political power. Today, these are the Muslims, generally Sunnīs, who regard the Hadith, particularly the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, to be an infallible representation of the Sunnah, and thereby at the same level of impeccability as the Qur’an. Scholars in this “tradition,” by placing unimpeachable “faith” in the full compilation of hadiths, despite contradictions with the Qur’an and the authentic Sunnah in some instances, have come to rationalize tolerating the oppressive policies of unjust rulers.

**ahzāb** – *confederates, regional confederation of military forces*; usually refers to the alliance of *mushrik* armies that surrounded Madinah during the Battle of the Trench (al-Khandaq), otherwise known as the Campaign of al-Ahzāb.

**ākhirah** – *the end-life or afterlife*; this expression refers to the hereafter, or afterlife, or life after death. In a more refined sense, this word alludes to the time-period that will follow the Day of Resurrection and Judgement.

**‘alim** – *learned person, intellectual, expert*; this expression usually refers to scholars, particularly scholars who are well versed on Islamic matters. Plural for ‘alim is ‘*ulamā*’.

**Ash‘arī** – Islamic theological school based on the thought of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī (260–324AH/ 873–935CE), generally considered to be the theological foundation of “Sunni” Islam. Al-Ash‘arī started out as a Mu‘tazilī, but even though he eventually rejected aspects of those ideas, he went on to apply the Mu‘tazilī use of dialectic and rational methods to the dogmas of Islam — except that whereas the Mu‘tazilāh had used logic to bring everything down to a horizontal plane, he accepted the transcendent aspects of divinity. Al-Ash‘arī is also known for the doctrine of *kasb* (literally *acquisition*) regarding human action. According to him, any act such as the mere raising of the hand, is created by Allah, but acquired by the creature who thus takes responsibility for it. This is a device to ascribe free will to man and therefore responsibility, but to reserve all power of action to Allah (ﷻ) alone. Refer to **Endnote 453** in Volume 10 for more information.

**ashrāt** – *terms (as in stipulations); signs, portents*. The plural of *shart*.

**‘Āshurā’** – the 10th day of the first month of the Islamic *hijri* calendar, al-Muḥarram. This is the anniversary of the day Imam Ḥusayn was murdered for his principled resistance to the illegitimate rule of the second Umayyad king, Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Su-

fyān. Typically, Shi'īs mark the occasion by observing the first ten days of al-Muḥarram, and in many cities of the Muslim world, by publicly mortifying themselves on the 10th day as an expression of guilt for abandoning the imams in their moments of greatest need. Ali Shariati, the incomparable Iranian Islamic scholar, has written that public self-flagellation and mutilation has nothing to do with Islamic, or even Shi'ī, theology; rather it is an expression of Ṣafawī "Islam" wherein representatives of the Ṣafawī dynasty (1501–1736) to Roman Catholic Europe imported aspects of the Christian passion play during annual occasions that marked the crucifixion of Christ. Though the passion play in all of Europe has now been reduced to nonviolent re-enactments using actors, Filipino Catholics still re-enact the crucifixion, atoning for their sins, by nailing themselves to crosses, wearing crowns of thorns, whipping themselves, and slashing their backs with razors. Though frowned upon by the Church today, the gruesome re-enactments of Christ's final moments (according to them) draw thousands of believers — and tourists — in a carnival-like atmosphere that is big business for locals.

Sunnīs, for the most part, do not even acknowledge the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn on the 10th day of al-Muḥarram, preferring instead to fast on the day because certain hadiths report the Prophet fasting on the 9th and the 10th as a veneration of the practice of Mūsá (ﷺ), who, according to Banū Isrā'īl, fasted on those days. Such attributions to the Prophet in Islamic hadith literature probably come from the *isrā'iliyat*.

***al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*** – Allah's beautiful and excelling names or attributes. *Asmā'ullāh* and *asmā'ullāh al-ḥusnā* are variations of the same.

***Aws*** – in Yathrib, one of the two main Arabian power factions, perpetually at war with each other, before the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ), the other one being the Khazraj.

***āyah*** – illustration, miracle; this could refer to Allah's illustration through revelation, that is, the verse(s) of the generous Qur'an; it can also refer to Allah's illustration of power and authority in the

course of prophetic and social history (that is, an alteration of physical laws: miracles); and lastly, it could refer to Allah's illustration of power as an act of creation. Plural for *āyah* is *āyāt*.

**āyatullāh** – an honorific title for high-ranking Shī'ī Islamic authorities. The title was formalized only in the 20th century. It arose out of the dominance in Persia of the Uṣūlī School of Imāmī Shī'īs over the Akhbārī School, which occurred in the 18th century. The Uṣūlīs maintain that, despite the absence of Imam al-Zamān (the Mahdī), highly qualified teachers have the capacity to make autonomous *ijtihādī* judgements as *mujtahids*, and that such an authority is a *marja' al-taqlīd* (reference for emulation). The Uṣūlī doctrine holds that an ordinary Shī'ī must be the follower of such a *mujtahid*; furthermore, the *mujtahid* must be living, as one is even forbidden to follow a dead *mujtahid*. The handful of *āyatullāhs* who are associated with seminaries such as at Tabriz, Qom, and Mashhad, constitute a kind of theological “college,” or synod. Newcomers are admitted to the ranks on the basis of recognition and acceptance by existing *āyatullāhs*, and by popular acclamation.

**Banū Isrā'īl** – *the Children of Israel*.

**bāṭil** – *falsehood, lies, misrepresentation, institutional corruption*; the opposite of *ḥaqq*.

**al-Bayt al-Ḥarām** – *the Sanctified (or Restricted) House*; this is the Inviolable House of Allah (ﷺ) in Makkah, which is described and should be maintained as *mathābatan li-al-nāsi wa-amnā* (a place of retreat for people and a zone of security). It is also referred to as simply the Ḥaram or al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. The perimeters of this Ḥaram extend to include most of Makkah.

**dā'ī** – *a caller to Islam*; an Islamic “missionary.”

**dajjāl** – *swindler, cheat, imposter; satanic ideologue*. The term *al-masīḥ al-dajjāl* refers to the Antichrist. The plural is *dajjālīn*.



**da'wah** – *call*; contemporarily used, though not necessarily right, to mean missionary activity designed to convince non-Muslims of Allah's message.

**dhāt** – *endowed or provided with, embodying or comprising something; possessor, owner; essence, nature*. In context, *asmā' al-dhāt* refer to the Names of Allah's Essence such as *al-Raḥmān*.

**dhikr** – *consciousness*; many times this word refers to a person's consciousness of Allah (ﷻ). This consciousness is not achieved simply by remembering Him, but further by Him reminding us.

**Dhū al-Ḥijjah** – *the twelfth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar*; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

**Dhū al-Qa'dah** – *the eleventh month of the Islamic hijrī calendar*; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

**dīn** – *ideological pattern and social prototype*; this word is probably one of the most mistranslated words. The usual translation of the word is *religion*. But in a better understanding of Islamic terms the word *dīn* should carry within its meaning a lively prototype and a social system. As such a *dīn* could be man-made and in denial of Allah (ﷻ) or it may be in conformity with Allah and in affirmation of Him.

**dunyā** – *world*.

**fāḥishah** – *misconduct, immoral behavior, moral violation*. Its plural is *fawāḥish*. An emphatic or exaggerated form of *fāḥishah* is *faḥshā'*.

**fāsiq** – *degenerate, decomposed*; this term usually is used in reference to human beings who initially commit themselves to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) but then later during the details of social

struggle show an elemental or visceral tendency to quit from the tasks and demands of such a struggle as it peaks. This failure of theirs is a failure of nerve and resolve at an *instinctual* level. The plural is *fāsiqūn*. The word *fusūq* is the noun, meaning *decomposition* or *decay*.

**fiqh** – *practical knowledge, legal knowledge, jurisprudence*; the moral and legal understanding and interpretation of Islamic norms and laws within a particular generation or set of circumstances.

**fiqhī** – *of or pertaining to fiqh*.

**fiṭraḥ** – *man's God-given state of nature*.

**ghayb** – *unseen, unknown, metaphysical, incomprehensible*.

**hadith** – a verbal or practical precedent of the Prophet (ﷺ); the simple linguistic meaning of the word is *speech*.

**al-Hadith** – the full body of hadith literature of the Prophet (ﷺ).

**Hajj** – *the Pilgrimage*; this is the annual meeting of the Muslims in Makkah during the last three months of the lunar year: Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa'daḥ, and Dhū al-Ḥijjah. The mass assembly of people during this annual congregation is Yawm 'Arafāt, which is the 9th day of Dhū al-Ḥijjah — the day before 'Īd al-Aḍḥá.

**ḥaqq** – *truth, veracity, validity; right (as in civil, human, natural, and inalienable rights)*.

**Ḥaram, the** – *Restricted Sanctuary*; the Ḥaram in the generic sense is the Inviolable House of Allah (ﷻ) in Makkah — the Ka'baḥ.

**ḥarām** – *taboo, unauthorized or unlawful*; the opposite of *ḥalāl*.

**al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf** – literally, *the Honorable Sanctuary*; in practice, however, it could refer to the entire city of Jerusalem or to the holy

sanctuary there, inclusive of al-Masjid al-Aqṣá, the Dome of the Rock, and the Wailing Wall; it is also referred to as Bayt al-Maqdis or the Temple Mount.

**al-Ḥijāz** – historical province of the Arabian Peninsula on the western shore of the Red Sea, the territory in which the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah are located.

**ḥujjaḥ al-islām** – *authority on Islam*. On the Sunnī side, this is an honorific title used almost exclusively for al-Ghazzālī; on the Shī‘ī side, however, it is a scholarly rank just below *āyatullāh*.

**‘ibādah** – *man’s proper position with his Maker and Creator: compliance, obedience, and conformity*; this is another one of those words badly bruised through translation. Translators render its meanings as *worship*. False. It is much more than a devotional or ritual gesture or habit. It is the notions and actions of man according to Allah’s values and principles.

**‘id** – *feast day, celebration, holy day*; usually used to refer to either ‘Īd al-Fiṭr (the feast day after the month of Ramaḍān, the first day of Shawwāl) or ‘Īd al-Aḍḥá (the high, holy Days of Sacrifice after the Hajj, the 10th–12th of Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ).

**ijtihād** – *a legal Islamic assessment or edict*; this word infers a rigorous scholarly effort to reach an informed opinion based upon the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

**īmān** – *secure commitment, covenant*; the word is virtually a distillation of *amānah* (trust) and *amn* (security).

**inshā’allāh** – *if Allah (ﷻ) wills, decrees, or wants*.

**intifādah** – *literally, an outpouring, an inundation (like from a flood); burst or eruption; mass resistance and protest*.

**iqāmah** – raising up; erection, establishment; staging. In conjunction with the *ṣalāh* — *iqāmat al-ṣalāh* — it means standardizing (and socializing) the *ṣalāh*.

**Islam** – resignation/yielding; this is a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) more than it is a religion. And it defines individuals and people who acquiesce and adhere to the will of Allah. Like other Qur’anic words, its specific meaning is refined within the context it is found. Generally speaking, it may be understood to refer to the “civic character” or “civilian status” of people once there is a full and meaningful *taqwā*-type orderliness with associated rules.

**al-ism al-a’zam** – the Supreme Name; refers to the designation Allah.

**al-Isrā’** – the night-journey of the Prophet (ﷺ) to Jerusalem, referenced in the first *āyah* of *Sūrah Banī Isrā’il* (17:1).

**isrā’iliyāt** – Jewish traditions falsely (or opportunistically) attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) that have found their way into compendiums of Islamic hadith literature.

**jāhil** – a constituent or citizen of a *jāhiliyāh*.

**jāhili** – pertaining to *jāhiliyāh* (ignocracy); ignocratic.

**jāhilin** – those who simultaneously lack knowledge and maturity; plural of *jāhil*.

**jāhiliyāh** – an era of governance without God, the age of systemic lack of scriptural guidance; it may be characterized as an “ignocracy” or “idiocracy.” It not only refers to the time preceding Muhammad (ﷺ), but also any time period in which Allah’s *dīn* is overrun by other systems and establishments.

**jalāl** – majesty, sublimity, augustness. In context, *asmā’ al-jalāl* refer to the Names of Aura, or Majesty, such as *al-Jalīl* or *al-‘Azīz*.

**jamā'ah** – *aggregation/congregation*; in a more exacting sense, it is the quorum of Muslims needed for a particular task or obligation.

**jamāl** – *beauty*. In context, *asmā' al-jamāl* refer to the Names of Mercy, or Beauty, such as *al-'Afuww* or *al-Karīm*.

**jihād** – *the ultimate effort and sacrifice*; it is not *holy war*. The word has a spectrum of meanings and applications that range from a struggle against the forces of evil within the self to a struggle against the forces of evil within the cosmos.

**jinn** – *unseen, intelligent beings*; this is an independent species of intelligent and advanced life that will be held accountable, like humans, on the Day of Judgement. Their composition is from the substance of fire, whereas man's composition is from the substance of clay.

**jinnī** – *of or pertaining to the jinn*.

**Jumādā al-Ūlá** – *the fifth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar*.

**al-Jumu'ah** – *the assembly day (the sixth day of the occidental week), Friday*; the day of the week in which Muslims assemble for their weekly congregational sermon and service. In some Muslim calendars, the day of Jumu'ah is considered to be the first day of the week.

**Ka'bah** – *a cubic structure, an object of veneration*; the black enshrouded cube at the center of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, originally built by Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il (ﷺ) and around which Muslim pilgrims perform their *tawāf* (circumambulation).

**kāfir** – *one who actively resists and refuses to comply with Allah (ﷻ)*; every person who enlists in *kufr* becomes a *kāfir*. Plurals are *kāfirūn*, *kāfirīn*, and *kuffār*; refer to the general definition of *kufr* below.

**khalīfah** – *successor*; this word has its Qur'anic context. In this context man/humans are designated as Allah's successors on earth. In

post-prophetic Islamic literature it refers to those who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) as the leader of the Muslims.

**Khazraj** – the other of the two main Arabian power factions in Yathrib, at war with the Aws, before the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ).

**al-Khiḍr** – a transcendental persona identified with the figure in the Qur’an, “...one of Our subjects, on whom We had bestowed grace from Ourselves and unto whom We had imparted knowledge [issuing] from Ourselves” (18:65). He is not mentioned by this designation in the Qur’an. When Mūsá (ﷺ) and his young attendant, as is recounted in *Sūrah al-Kahf* (18:61–83), go looking for the union of the two seas, that is, the sea of this world and the sea of the next, or manifestation and Being, Mūsá is distracted. The fish they are carrying to eat comes to life and slips away, showing them that they have passed — seeing, but not observing — their goal. In retracing their steps, they encounter the figure described above. Mūsá wishes to follow al-Khiḍr but is told that he will not be able to bear with that mysterious figure. Therefore Mūsá promises to ask no questions, but simply to obey. The two, Mūsá and al-Khiḍr, now encounter three situations in which al-Khiḍr performs apparent outrages, disfiguring a boat, killing a young lad, and repairing a wall without compensation. Mūsá each time, and despite his promise, expresses dismay at the actions and is finally abandoned by al-Khiḍr, who explains upon parting, the hidden reasons behind his actions, which were intended to bring a greater good out of an apparent evil, and which were done at the command of Allah (ﷻ).

According to the most usual Sufi commentary, Mūsá represents exoterism with its limitations, grasping at the external and apparent, whereas al-Khiḍr represents the inner dimension, esoterism, which transcends form. He appears to men in those moments when their own soul bears witness to an awareness of that dimension.

**khilāfah** – *successorship; Caliphate.*

**khulafā’** – *plural of khalifah.*

**khutbah** – sermon, speech, lecture.

**kitābī** – a person belonging to scripture; often refers to the Judeo-Christian experience with scripture and its alteration/redaction to suit the special interests of the people in power.

**kufr** – denial of Allah’s authority and power; this becomes a “philosophy” or an “ideology.” There is a mental construct of ideas that argue against Allah (ﷻ) as Sovereign, Lawgiver, and Authority. There may be many expressions of this antithetical hypothesis and political orientation; but one thing in common among all of them — bar none — is their exclusion of Allah as the Almighty and the ultimate Authority.

**lā ilāha illā Allāh** – there is no deity/authority (worthy of conformity) except Allah.

**al-ladhīna ittaqaw** – those who are actively conscious of Allah’s power presence and hence always on the alert and on the defensive pertaining to Allah (ﷻ).

**Madinan** – having to do with Madinah; usually refers to Qur’anic verses (āyāt) revealed in Madinah.

**al-Mahdī** – the Guided One. A figure many Muslims believe will appear before the end of the world to restore the pristine purity of the Prophet’s rule and thus unite the various schools of law and political divisions within the house of Islam. The belief in the role of the Mahdī is common to almost all Muslims, Sunnī and Shī’ī alike.

**Makkan** – having to do with Makkah; often refers to Qur’anic verses (āyāt) revealed in Makkah.

**Mālikī** – one of the four institutional Sunnī Islamic schools of law (madhhabs), based on the teachings and rulings of Mālik ibn Anas (93–179AH). Today, it is dominant in North and West Africa.

**manna** – an edible substance similar in appearance to grain and with a taste as sweet as honey.

**marḥūmūn** – those who receive Allah’s mercy; plural of *marḥūm*.

**masjid** – the place or area of *sujūd* (prostration); a mosque.

**al-Masjid al-Aqṣá** – the Distant Masjid; this is the *masjid* in al-Quds (Jerusalem), located in an area called al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf (the Honorable Sanctuary). This is the area from which the Prophet (ﷺ) ascended to heaven in his famous night-journey from Makkah to al-Quds (known formally as *al-isrā’ wa-al-mi’rāj*). Thus, there are three holy sanctuaries: the first in Makkah, al-Masjid al-Ḥarām; the second in Madinah, al-Masjid al-Nabawī (the Prophet’s Masjid); and the third in al-Quds, al-Masjid al-Aqṣá.

**al-Masjid al-Ḥarām** – the Restricted Sanctuary; see also the Ḥaram and al-Bayt al-Ḥarām.

**mass** – touching, touch; stirring, contact; insanity, madness, possession; infringement, violation.

**miswāk** – a twig from the *Salvadora persica* tree, usually employed to clean and disinfect the teeth. *Siwāk* and *miswāk* refer to the same object.

**mūthāq** – the most confidential of covenants. The occurrence of the word in a specific context narrows or fine-tunes its general meaning.

**mufassir** – exegetist; one who explains the meanings of the Qur’an.

**mufsid** – a corrupt, unscrupulous, and degenerate person, who has the capacity (power) to drive these characteristics into the society at large.

**mujtahid** – one who issues or is capable of issuing a legal Islamic assessment or edict; refer to the definition of *ijtihād* above.



**mu'min** – every person who is firmly and securely committed to Allah (ﷻ); a bearer of *īmān*. See *īmān* above.

**mushrik** – an individual(s) and people(s) who actively and institutionally diminish the authority of Allah and promote the authority of others. They equate worldly powers with Allah (ﷻ) and they denigrate Allah as “one among many” deities and authorities. The feminine singular is *mushrikah*; feminine plural is *mushrikāt*.

**muttaqī** – one who is actively conscious of Allah’s power presence and hence is always on the alert and on the defensive pertaining to Allah (ﷻ); this word should never be translated as *pious* or *fearful*, as it is known nowadays.

**al-nabī al-ummī** – the unlettered prophet or the prophet of a people who did not have a legacy of scripture; it is one of the designations for the Arab (as opposed to Hebrew) prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ).

**nafkhaḥ** – puff, breath; inflation, swelling. It is Allah’s *nafkhaḥ* that causes the soil and earth component of man’s body to come to life, “...whereupon We breathed of Our spirit into it...” (66:12).

**al-nafkhatayn** – the two soundings of the trumpet, the first at the resurrection, and the second at the grand assembly for the ultimate accountability.

**nafs** – the bio-self.

**Naṣārā** – theological Christians or political Christians (defined by context).

**nastaghfir-allāh** – we ask Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness.

**na‘ūdhu bi-allāh** – we invoke Allah’s protection [from the accursed one, Satan].

**nazgh** – satanic inspiration.

**niqāb** – *veil*. Usually refers to a head covering worn by some Muslim women in public, covering all of the face apart from the eyes.

**nīyah** – *intention, design, purpose; determination*.

**qā'idah** – *foundation, base; ledger, database*.

**qalb** – *heart; core, gist; mind, soul, spirit*.

**qāri'** – *he who recites the Qur'an according to its rules for proper vocalization and intonation (tajwīd); plural is qurrā'*.

**qiblah** – *the accommodating and unifying center that attracts the Muslims in their time of ṣalāh and devotional services*. The Muslims' qiblah is Makkah.

**al-Quds** – *the Consecrated City*; this, obviously, is the name of Jerusalem in the Arabic language.

**Quraysh** – *literally, little shark*; refer to **Endnote 250** in Volume 11 and **Endnote 257** in Volume 7 for a brief history of the dominant power constituent of Makkah.

**Qurayshī** – *having to do with the Quraysh*.

**Rasūl-Allāh** – *the Messenger of Allah*; also called Allah's Apostle, Allah's Messenger, or simply the Prophet. When this is used in Islamic literature, the majority of times it is in reference to the final messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ).

**Ṣaḥābah** – *the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)*.

**Ṣaḥīḥs, the Two** – *the compilation of hadiths collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim; the two most reliable reference books on hadith*.

**sajdah** – *prostration*. This is one of the motions of *ṣalāh*, when a praying Muslim puts his forehead on the ground and glorifies the Almighty. The plural is *sujūd*.

**Salafī** – *a person who attributes himself to the first generations of Islam*; today, this word is used to describe a certain segment of Muslims who are, in general, fast and loose with accusing other Muslims of *kufr*. Some would say the Salafīs are the “next generation” of Wahhābīs.

**ṣalāh** – *expressing a concentrated and devotional relationship with Allah* (ﷻ); Muslims do this five times a day: *Fajr*, *Zuhr*, *‘Aṣr*, *Maghrib*, and *‘Ishā’*.

**salām** – *soundness, intactness; peace; safety, security*.

**ṣāliḥūn** – *those who sincerely do good works for the cause of Allah* (ﷻ), *expecting no earthly gratification or reward*; plural of *ṣāliḥ*.

**Shafi’ī** – *one of the four institutional Sunnī Islamic schools of thought (madhhabs), based on the teachings and rulings of Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāf’ī (150–204AH)*. Shāfī’ī scholars are considerably more circumspect about hadith literature than their Ḥanbalī counterparts. The *madhhab* is prevalent in the Arab Muslim East, and in Indonesia and Malaysia.

**shahīd** – *martyr*; the plural is *shuhadā’*.

**shari‘ah** – *legal course; more technically, the codes, procedures, and laws that take society in the direction of prosperity and survival*. The word originally meant — before the Qur’an was revealed — to take a path to a body of fresh water; now it generally refers to the body of Islamic law.

**Shari‘ah, the** – *the Islamic legal system*.

**Shī'ī** – literally, *a follower*; the intimate group around the Prophet (ﷺ) inclusive of his family and his bloodline descendants. This was a term coined by Mu'āwiyah to single out and sideline the supporters of Imam 'Alī as a cult of personality that had separated and deviated from the rest of the Ummah. The two main denominations are the Imāmīs (Ithna-'Asharīs) and the Zaydīs.

**shirk** – *the act and implementation of equating or associating others with Allah (ﷻ) as divine and as authority*; in other words the displacement of allegiance in man's heart and the dislocation of authority in man's life. See also *mushrik* above.

**shuhadā'** – *plural of shahīd*.

**ṣiddiqūn** – *those who remain true to their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) despite obvious challenges to the contrary*; plural of ṣiddīq.

**ṣifāt** – *qualities, properties, characteristics; attributes*. In context, *al-ṣifāt* refer to the Names of Allah's Qualities such as *al-Raḥīm* or *al-Bārī*. It is the plural of ṣifaḥ.

**Sīrah** – *biography of the Prophet (ﷺ)*; this is an account of his lifetime, particularly its struggle aspect during his years of prophethood in Makkah and Madinah.

**Sufi** – *mystic*.

**sujūd** – *plural of sajdah*.

**sunan** – *social laws*. This is the word's Qur'anic meaning insofar as such laws are the pattern of history, human activities, and nature. *Sunan* also refers to a compilation of hadith collected and organized by a *muḥaddith*, one who searches hadith literature with a view to organizing and verifying hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is the plural of *sunnah*.

***sunnah*** – social law; its plural is *sunan*.

**Sunnah, the** – the lifestyle pattern of the Prophet; or the final set of social laws imparted by Allah (ﷻ) to humanity through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ).

**Sunnī** – literally, one who adheres to the Sunnah; the core group around the Prophet (ﷺ) inclusive of his companions and their non-errant descendants. This is an abbreviated form of a term invented by Mu‘āwiyah — *ahl al-sunnah wa-al-jamā‘ah* — to give legitimacy to his usurpation and takeover by force of the highest office in the Islamic State.

***sūrah*** – ensemble of a body of themes in the Qur’an; there are 114 *sūrah*s in the glorious Qur’an.

***tafsīr*** – exegesis; simple interpretation or critical interpretation of the meanings of the Qur’an.

***ṭāghūt*** – concentration and abuse of excessive power; this word is usually used to describe governments and regimes that, having accumulated wealth and resources, find themselves in a “superpower” or “hyper-power” position in the world. The exercise of this kind of centralized power makes these governments rivals (in their own consciousness) to the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ). This aggregation and engrossment of power becomes satanic.

***ṭāghūti*** – adjective referring to *ṭāghūt*.

***ṭāhir*** – state of bio-purity.

***takbīrah al-ihrām*** – the enunciation of the phrase “*Allāhu akbar: Allah is the greatest (or greater),*” that begins the *ṣalāh*.

**taqlīd** – *imitation, tradition, custom*; the practice of less-knowledgeable Muslims accepting the scholarly opinions and legal decisions of most-knowledgeable Muslims — the *faqīhs* and imams.

**taqwá** – *the feeling and thinking of Allah's immediate power presence in the affairs of man that makes a person avoid Allah's corrective interference in man's individual and social life.*

**tariqah** – *way, method, procedure, system; creed.* It refers, usually within the Sufi domain, to an Islamic training program that is endorsed or founded by an Islamic scholar or mystic.

**taṣawwuf** – *mysticism; Sufism.*

**tawhīd** – *monotheism, singular divine authority*; this combines in its connotational and denotational meanings all the consolidated and indivisible traits and understandings of Allah (ﷻ). In *His* self, *He* is one; in *His* attributes, *He* is one; therefore, in any way the human mind tries to understand *Him*, *He* remains exalted — as *He* distinguishes *Himself* in *His* own words.

**'ulamā'** – *learned persons, intellectuals, experts*; plural of 'alim.

**ummaḥ** – *the consolidation of a collective will.*

**Ummah, the Islamic** – (*uppercase reference is always to*) *the Islamic ummaḥ of Muhammad (ﷺ).*

**wahy** – *revelation; inspiration.*

**waswās** – *devilish insinuation, temptation.*

**yafqahūna** – *they understand in practical terms, they have relevant comprehension.*

**yasjudūn** – *they are prostrating.*

**Yathrib** – the (pre-Islamic) name of the city of Madinah before the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived there.

**Zāhiri** – Islamic school of law (*madhhab*) based on the teachings/rulings of its founder, Dāwūd ibn ‘Alī ibn Khalaf al-Zāhiri (199–270AH). It is characterized by its reliance on literalist (*ẓāhir*) interpretations of the Qur’an and Sunnah, and by its rejection of *qiyās* as a source of Islamic legislation. One of its more influential proponents was Ibn Ḥazm. Though it is still recognized by contemporary Islamic scholars, the *madhhab* is largely considered to be non-existent.

**ẓulm** – *injustice/oppression*; this is the practical result, in human societies, of deleting Allah (ﷻ) as the only Authority and only Power in life. Many times in the divine Writ Allah refers to *shirk* as being a massive expression of *ẓulm*. For those who are confused about who the *mushriks* are, they only need to look at parts of the world where there is colossal injustice and identify the operators of that injustice.





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